MEMOIRS OF
A BYGONE ERA

P K DEO

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by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
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P K Deo

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MEMOIRS OF A BYGONE ERA

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Late H H Chinmayanandji Maharaj
My Vedantic Spiritual Guru

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P K Deo with his Wife, K M Debi
in Srinagar (Kashmir) 1958

Dedicated to the loving memory of my dear wife, H H Maharani Kasturika Modini Debi, who passed away on 23rd August 1983 giving me a new lease of life by taking away the dreadful disease, cancer from me. We will meet some day.

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FOREWORD

I was born in the early part of the eventful twentieth century. I witnessed many ups and downs of history - Pax Britannica in its full glory and in its liquidation; the birth of a free but truncated India, born out of communal hate and distrust, bringing in its trail innumerable miseries and the fratricide of millions leaving their hearths and homes. The world saw a new and costly experiment of communism, which destroyed all old institutions and their values, subjugated individual initiative while creating a monolithic dictatorship of the proletariat. Ultimately, its own advocates rejected it.

This period saw two world wars in which many lives were lost and in which nuclear explosions on Japanese soil shook the world. Though science reduced the power of the elements for the welfare of mankind, it arrived in the corridor of power with an atom bomb in its hands, pushing the globe to the fringe of total annihilation. These unforgettable incidents of man killing millions for no fault of theirs have left deep wounds on my mind. The Gas Chambers of Hitler's Germany; the mass graves in USSR of the land owners killed by Stalin and other communists; and the butchering of millions of innocent refugees in search of new homes in the Indian Subcontinent, in 1947, can never be forgotten.

'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam' is the only panacea to all such maladies, and for the bad blood which whets the appetite for human domination. All this is due to the population explosion. 'Vedanta' is the biggest gift of *Bharat Varsa* to this sick world. Unless one surrenders one's ego and is answerable for one's actions to God, this civilisation is

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doomed.

There are two great world personalities at whose feet I learnt a few lessons of truth. The first is C Rajagopalachari (10.12.1878-25.12.1972). At the age of eighty-one, Rajaji formed the Swatantra Party. I was its first elected leader in the Lok Sabha, in 1962. I spoke the bitter truth about the need for a free economy and the creative genius of man, the evils of corruption arising out of control, the license permit quota raj, the expropriation of private property and liberty. I spoke when the entire atmosphere was saturated with socialist ideals and slogans. The second was Swami Chinmayananda (8.5.1916-3.8.1993) who gave the world the message of 'Vedanta' through the *Bhagavad Gita*. He was the light giver and pathfinder in this troublesome world.

To learn Vedanta philosophy propagated by Sankar through *Bhagavad Gita* (the Smruti Prasthan), Mr Andres Malraux, the intellectual and inspiring innovator as de Gaulle's cultural minister after World War II; one of the great minds of his time, philosopher and writer, learnt Sanskrit to study *Bhagavad Gita* in its pristine glory and blessed India to be guided by Sankar, as Europe according to him is 'the cemetery of all ideas', as stated earlier in 1936 before Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a Paris restaurant. Mahatma Gandhi had also stated that he wanted to open all the windows to let fresh air of new ideas flow into his room, but he could not be blown away as his feet were firmly fixed.

I am seventy-nine years old and may vanish before the advent of the twenty-first century. I wish my readers and posterity all the best in their material, moral and spiritual life.

I pray that the Upper Indravati Project be completed and irrigate the land in Kalahandi command area, and not a drop of its precious water be wasted.

P K Deo

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From H H Maharaja P K Deo (A Sovereign)
to P K Deo (A Subject)

I, P K Deo, happen to be the thirty-first ruler of Karond or Kalahandi state and ruled from September 1939 to January 1948. I am a direct descendant of Sri Raghunath Sai, the first ruler who occupied the throne in 1005 AD and ruled till 1040 AD. This is as per the genealogy of the Naga House of Kalahandi. The name 'Kalahandi' first appears in a stone inscription of Maharaja Juga Sahay Deo in Kalahandi Nagar, i.e. Junagarh of 1780 AD. Prior to this, the area was known as Karond, and covered 4,000 to 5,000 sq. miles. Its borders varied according to the fortunes of war with the adjoining principalities. The Nagas are known to have ousted the Kusans from this country and, being the worshippers of Shiva and Shakti established Saivaism and Shaktaism. This is corroborated by the Asanpat stone inscription. We belong to the *Kasyap Gotra*, and the area we ruled was known as the Karond Mandala as per the Madras Museum Plate. This is also corroborated by the Narla Siva temple inscription dated 1231 AD. Narla is quite close to the Asurgah Fort, where

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there is supposed to have been a mint. Hoards of Punchmark coins of the Maurya and Kushan periods were minted and excavated in abundance.

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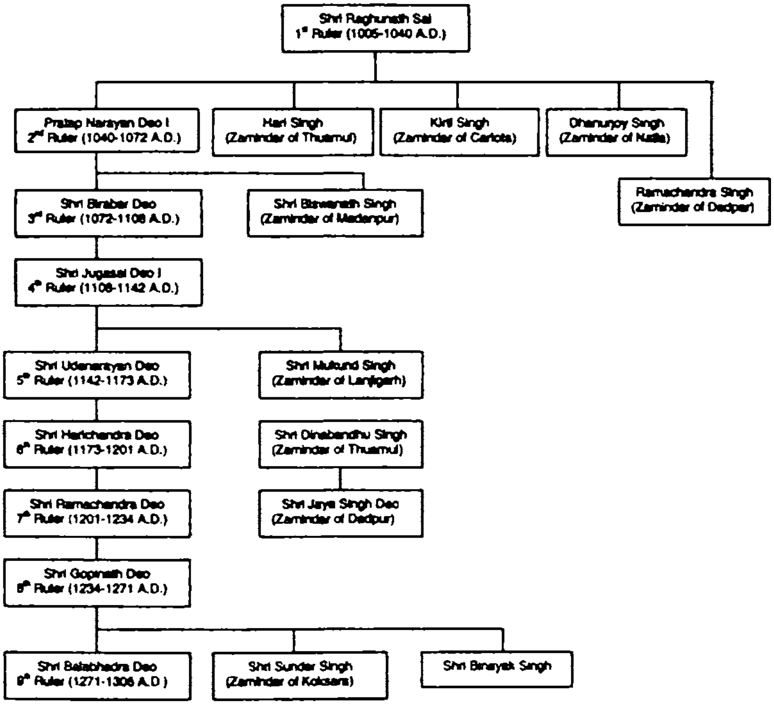
GENEALOGY OF THE NAGA HOUSE OF KALAHANDI



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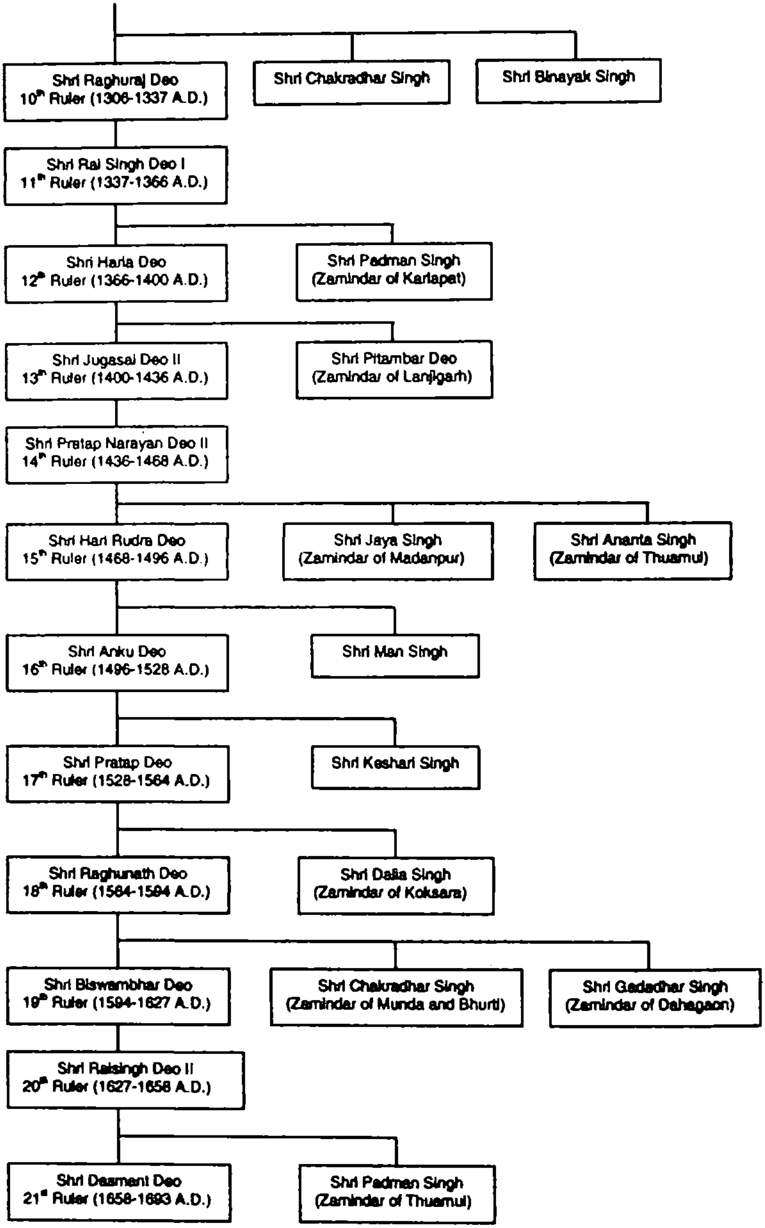

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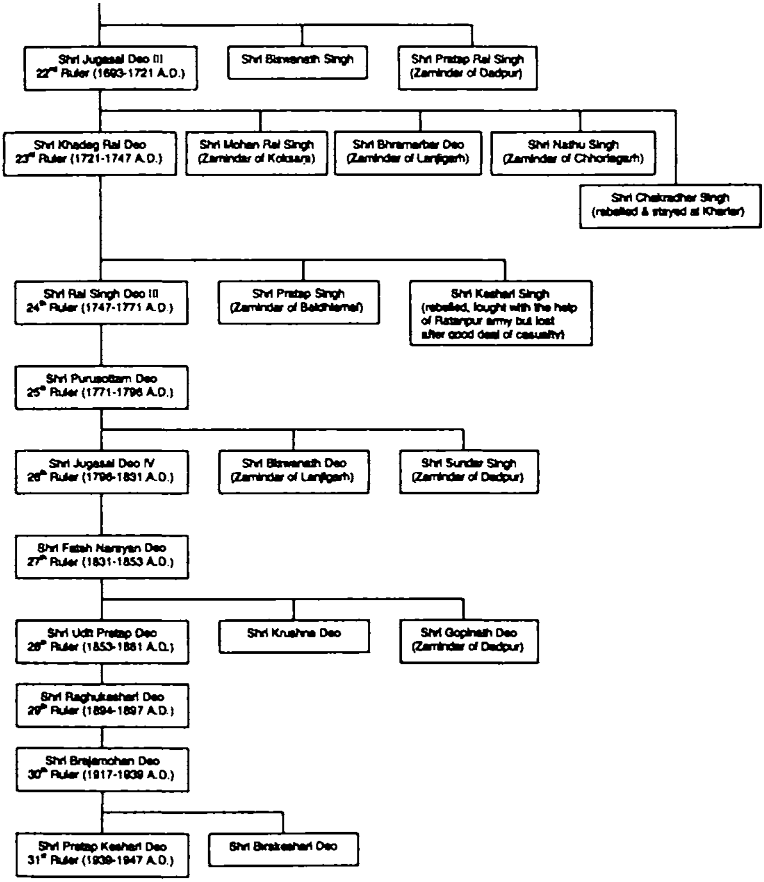

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Chapter I

CHILDHOOD, 1919-1934

I was born on 5 October 1919. The important event of the year was the Paris Peace Conference, where the League of Nations grew out of the catastrophe of World War I (1914 to 1918), in which ten million people lost their lives, emerged with the noble objective of the settlement of all disputes among nations and the prevention of future war. The League of Nations did not become a universal organisation. Despite President Woodrow Wilson's advocacy, the United States did not join the League; USSR joined only in 1934. The three aggressor states of the Second World War, i.e. Germany, Italy and Japan, withdrew their membership in 1930. The League's failure to prevent the outbreak of World War II did not destroy the belief in the necessity of a universal organisation, which it had learnt from the mistakes of the past. This was finally established as the UNO at the San Francisco Conference in 1945 with the combined effort of fifty countries.

However, the inter war period between 1918-1939 was the most difficult period of the century, and the turning point in world history. President Wilson of the USA, the kingpin of the negotiations after World War I, left the concept of 'self determination' vague. He optimistically told the US Congress that people now will be dominated or governed by their own consent. The British Empire became the biggest bureaucracy. An additional one million square miles of land was added to the already existing thirteen million of people, one quarter of the human race. In the

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hall of the mirrors in Versailles, Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister was at centre stage and carved out the British Empire upon which the sun never used to set. In the Pacific, former German colonies went to Australia and New Zealand. Annexing German Tanganyika in Africa, an all red Corridor from Cape to Cairo was carved from the disintegrated Ottoman (Turkish) Empire. Sudan, Trans Jordan, Aden and Mesopotamia became parts of the British Empire. Africa and Arab lands were divided among the victors as if there was a scramble to grab as much as one could to subjugate the world at large. Pax Britannica was at the top, and the British Empire was the storage of all the nations. In industrial growth, commerce, navy, army and air force it had no parallel; but it had no place for revolutionary ideas and for the dreams of Independence brewing in the colonies.

In the colonies, thousands of British nationals were provided soft jobs. They lived privileged lives justified by the so-called call of duty to rule the less fortunate. Though India was the choicest possession of the British, they realised its ancient and superior culture as having assimilated all foreigners who had come as conquerors, and subsequently had become a part and parcel of India's mainstream. In 1942, H E R G Cassey, the then Governor of Bengal who was Australia's representative in Churchill's war cabinet, told me at the Government House, Calcutta that the British always feared losing their identity in India. This is what kept them aloof from the Indian masses.

At that time, Kalahandi used to supply its surplus paddy to the Bengal famine area. I went to meet the governor to raise the procurement price, as the M/s Ishpahani and Company (now in Pakistan) were the procurement agents at that time. He further told me that in all administrative centres and cantonments, the British had their own administrative and social centres such as the Civil Lines,

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European Clubs, Golf Courses, Swimming Pools, Dance Halls, etc. In a way, they created little Londons even where they lived. In 1942, I was politely told by a British hall porter in the Royal Golf Club at Tollygung that I could not be allowed membership since I was a coloured person. That was the situation then.

The children of Indo-British marriages were known as Anglo-Indians for whom jobs were reserved in the Railways, Customs, and Police Departments. Administrative and Army jobs were the privileges of the British. When India became independent, there were very few senior Army officers who could man the biggest fighting machine of the world.

Besides establishing a few universities and colleges on the British pattern under Lord Macaulay's education policy, and imparting education through the English medium, they could produce only clerks and *babus* who could carry out dictates from London at a distance of 7,000 miles across the seas.

The imperial subjugation of India was from 1877 to 1947. In this period of seventy years, they completely neglected the promotion of Indian art, music, culture, and oriental studies. At this time, it is the Indian Princely States who came forward to uphold and promote the Indian art, music, painting, dance and sports. Indian Princely States such as Baroda, Patiala, Gwalior, Mysore, Travancore, Maihar, Raigarh and others patronised and provided grants to eminent artists and sportsmen.

In Orissa as well, poets, writers, singers, and artists prospered under the patronage of the Orissa rulers, and even the zamindars under them (and in British India) helped in this regard. The thorough repair of the famous Lingaraj Temple at Bhubaneswar was done in the 1920s at a cost of Rs30,000 by the late Maharaja B M Deo of Kalahandi. The voluminous Oriya Lexicon, i.e.

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Purnachandra Oriya Bhasa-kosh was the contribution of the late Maharaja P C Bhanj Deo and other aristocrats of Orissa. The *Sambalpur Hitaisini* paper was published from Deogarh under the patronage of Raja Sir Basudev Sudhal Deb who not only established the first hydroelectric plant and the longest telephone line in Orissa but patronised many Oriya and Sanskrit writers such as Radhanath Ray, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Gangadhar Meher, Chintamani Mohanty, Madhusudan-Tarka-Vachaspati, Neelamani Vidyaratna, etc.

Sir Bir Bikramaditya Singh Deo, Maharaja of Sonepur, established the Sonepur chair for postgraduate studies in Oriya Literature in Calcutta University (now named after somebody else), when Oriya was considered as a dialect of Bengali and was to be abolished as the court language. Hindi came to be used as the court language in the Sambalpur area of Central Provinces. The Utkal Sammilani was established on 31 December 1903 by Maharaja Sri Ramachandra Bhanj Deo of Mayurbhanj, as its President. Its purpose was the unification of all Oriya tracks, then under Bengal-Madras Presidencies and Central Provinces. The twenty-six Indian States were to be under one administrative unit. This was definitely praiseworthy. The Oriyas were grateful and eager to be together under one administration. Sri Madhusudan Das, Barrister, was its first Secretary. They established 381 branches in outlying Oriya tracks and submitted a well-documented memorandum to the then Governor General and Viceroy, Lord Curzon, for its establishment as one administrative unit as part of India. In subsequent years, this convention was invariably presided over by other rulers and zamindars, but its guiding force was Sri Madhusudan Das.

Though rudderless and spontaneous, the upsurge of the Indians to be free in the 1857 Sepoy Mutiny was ruthlessly crushed by the British Armed Forces with the help of some

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Indian Rulers and people who preferred to be loyal to the foreigners who were adequately rewarded. Later we come across such instances in Gwalior, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Rewa, the Sikh states in Eastern Punjab and small states in Eastern India such as Saraikela, and Dasapala. They all supported the British; the rest of the Indian States remained neutral.

In 1877, Maharaja Udit Pratap Deo of Kalahandi attended the Delhi Durbar where Queen Victoria was proclaimed as the Empress of India. In that durbar, Kalahandi got a hereditary salute of nine guns with a sword and a golden Kaiser-i-Hind medal. In 1910, my father Maharaja Brajamohan Deo of Kalahandi and the Maharaja of Cooch Bihar were the only saluted rulers from Eastern India who were given a special interview with His Majesty, King George V, at the Coronation Durbar at Delhi. Kalahandi was independent right from early eleventh century AD when the Nagavanshi rulers established their kingdom and the author happens to be the thirty-first ruler of that dynasty. However, for a short period from 1788 to 1818 AD, the Bhonsla of Nagpur exercised his suzerainty till Appa Saheb Bhonsla was defeated by the British in the Anglo Maratha War III. Kalahandi's first engagement with the British came in 1853.

India, then, was governed from Delhi. The area directly under British administration was known as British India, and the 500 odd *de jure* sovereign states were known as Indian-India. Their political relations with the British Crown were negotiated under various treaties and engagements. The Governor General for British India at Delhi functioned as the Viceroy for the Indian States as the representative of the paramount power. This Paramountcy was never properly defined. It was interpreted by the officers of Political Department in any way they liked.

The Indian desire to be free from the brute force of the English found expression in the early part of the century.

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The Indian National Congress was set up in 1885 in Bombay under the Presidentship of Sri Romesh Chandra Banerjee and the Secretaryship of Mr Allan Octovian Hume. It attempted to channelise the restiveness of the people which was being expressed in different ways, as subsequent events unfolded themselves. Lokmanya Tilak roared 'Swaraj is my birthright.' These revolutionaries took a different course to express their anger against British rule. Raja Mahendra Pratap (my distinguished colleague and MP from Mathura in the second Lok Sabha) absconded from India for which he forfeited his Zamindari in Uttar Pradesh. In the second Lok Sabha, we tried our best that the injustice done to him by the British should be rectified by our own government. But the then Home Minister, Sri Govind Ballav Pant did not agree to this appropriate demand.

The British period witnessed the establishment of several colleges for the education of the princes and other members of the Indian aristocracy in such a way, so as to produce surrogate Britishers. These were the Mayo College, Ajmer; Raj Kumar College, Raipur; Raj Kumar College, Rajkot; Daly College, Indore; and Atchission College, Lahore. The rulers of Indian States who had so far enjoyed the natural leadership of the people in their areas against external aggression and internal commotion, lost this leadership under the protection of the paramount power. They competed with each other to get crumbs of favour from the British in the form of titles, salutes and protocol. These Indian States had direct relations with the British Governor through political agents and residents whose main task was to interfere in the internal administration of the states where there was grave misrule or where the ruler's loyalty to the Crown was questionable.

Mahatma Gandhi came from South Africa in 1915. He organised the Indian National Congress to vent the

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grievances of the Indian people while recognising that any violent force would not be able to expel the British Raj with its overwhelming fire power. Many General Dyers of Jalianwala Bagh notoriety were ready to massacre the Indian people. Unlike the terrorist activities of the revolutionaries, Mahatma Gandhi opted for 'civil disobedience and non-co-operation'. He was detained without trial under a British Law of 1827 for leading the Salt Satyagraha.

The latter caught the imagination of the masses and inspired the youth of India. This continued till India actually attained Independence. I was no exception. Mahatma Gandhi became a messiah of the masses. In Case No. 45 of the Ahmedabad Sessions Court ('Rex Emperor-vs-Gandhi') on 18 March 1922, Mahatma Gandhi boldly stated, 'British connection with India was fatal to the welfare of the country. To preach dissatisfaction against the existing system of government appears to me as the highest duty of a citizen, and to you, in law, it may be a deliberate crime and I invite the highest penalty of the court.' Although in those days there was no microphone or public address systems, a Congress meeting attracted lakhs of people.

The British were groping for a solution in India, the proudest colony of the Crown. The then system of British Government was becoming an awkward anachronism. They did not know what to do. Britishness in India had become a topic of debate. In Victorian days, the monarchy was a part of every thought of the Indian intellectual. Rabindranath Tagore wrote the National Anthem of India in praise of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India.

The Oriya poet, Sri Madhusudan Rao, sang in praise of Queen Victoria as 'The Mother'. But when the situation in India became uncontrollable, the British Government's wavering policy gave India 'Diarchy'. The Conservative Government of 1927 set up an Indian Commission of

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Enquiry under Lord Simon, which included no Indian. Named as the Simon Commission, it was boycotted in India. In 1929, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald of the Labour Party announced the Indian Dominion within the British Commonwealth. British rule did do some permanent good to India. It organised a cadre of civil servants who have continued as the steel frame of administration even after Independence. The Army was modernised.

The British system of judiciary, considered the best in the world for their impartiality and independence, was established. The construction of railways not only facilitated the movement of troops and food grains at the time of Emergency, but also contributed to a great extent towards the integration of India. The English language is also one of the binding forces for Indians with various languages and cultures. Though we acknowledge that which binds this country with various regional customs, languages, cultures, traditions and ways of life as 'one whole', through which media, all official correspondences, judicial decrees, scientific researches, international communications are conducted even today in English, we cannot ignore the fact that their approach was purely colonial.

On the 17 April 1943 when the British Empire was fighting its grim battle of life and death during World War II, Sir Maurice Gwyer, the then Chief Justice of the Federal Court of India, had the firmness to declare rule 262 of the Defence of India Rules as unlawful and ultra vires of the then prevailing Indian Constitution under the pretext of maintenance of public order.

Mahatma Gandhi and C Rajagopalachari considered British administration better than Indian rule. Rajaji wrote in his prison diary as far back as 24 January 1922, 'Elections and their corruptions, injustice, power and tyranny of wealth and inefficiency of administration will make a hell of

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life as soon as freedom is given to us. Man will look regretfully back to the old regime of comparable justice and efficient, peaceful, more or less honest administration. The only thing gained will be that as a race we will be saved from dishonour and subordination. Hope lies only in universal education by which right conduct, fear of God and love will be developed among the citizens from childhood.'

Under British Paramountcy, Indian States were ruled by the rulers with or without the help of ministers. In theory, they were fully autocratic but practice varied greatly from state to state. Consequently, administration varied in kind and degree with regard to the participation of its subjects. The administration of the highly organised and progressive state like Mysore (which had the distinction of Diwans like Sir Visweswaraya or Sir Mirza Ismail) was considered far better than that of the British by Mahatma Gandhi and Sri C Rajagopalachari. At the same time, we find extremely backward states with oppressive rulers. However, the feudal concept of the ruler as *Maa Baap* by the subjects, and disposition of quick and impartial justice served, as they were the cementing forces between the ruler and the ruled. British India was ruled with the aid of the Central Legislative Assembly, which had limited powers of legislation. In 1921, the Chamber of Princes was established. It functioned as a Consultative Committee in political matters, and matters of common concern relating to the paramount power and Indian States. In the evolution of the political system as a result of Round Table Conference, the Government of India Act 1935 was passed by the British Parliament. This suggested a federal structure for India in the Centre, and provincial autonomy in the states. The Indian States could join in a federation. Two new provinces were carved, i.e. Sindh (a predominantly Muslim province) by dividing the Bombay Presidency; and

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Orissa (a predominantly Hindu province) uniting the outlying Oriya tracks from Bihar and Orissa, the Central Provinces and the Madras Presidency. This was so because the British, from the beginning, tried to inject the communal virus in the body politic of the vast country. In their pursuit of the policy of 'divide and rule', they created a separate electorate on the basis of religion.

P K Deo with C Rajagopalachari in Madras, 3 June 1972

The outlying Oriya-speaking tract in Bihar and Orissa, Central Provinces and Madras Presidency were put together to form the Orissa Province. It had six districts. It was a deficit province and subsisted on Central aid from the Government of India. In 1937, Orissa's total revenue was Rs172.50 lakhs including the Central subvention of Rs42.00 lakhs. The coastal districts (i.e. Cuttack, Puri and Balasore which were part of Bengal Presidency) were known as 'Mogul-bandhi' as they were subjugated by the Moghals during the time of Emperor Akbar.

The Orissa Princely States known as Gadjat did not form part of Orissa. To the group of these Orissa States,

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another five Oriya speaking states (i.e. Kalahandi, Patna, Sonepur, Bamra and Rairakhol from Central Provinces) and another four Oriya speaking states (i.e. Saraikela, Kharswan, Gangpur and Bonai from Chotanagpur), were added in 1905 AD. In 1936, these twenty-four states along with sixteen Chhatisgarh states of Central Provinces, Tripura and Coochbihar, formed the Eastern States Agency. For convenience, the Oriya speaking states of Kalahandi and Patna were tagged to the Chhatisgarh group of states, and Mayurbhanj to the Bengal group, with a British Resident at Calcutta. In spite of political isolation, these Oriya States never felt even for a moment that they were non-Oriyas. During British rule, they patronised and promoted Oriya language, literature, art, dance and drama and other cultural activities, along with sports. The contributions of Sir Basudev Sudhal Deb and Sachhidanand Tribhuban Deb of Bamra; Ramachandra Bhanj Deo and Purnachandra Bhanj Deo of Mayurbhanj; Sri Surapratap Dev Mahindra Bahadur of Dhenkanal; Sir Biramitra Singh Deo of Sonepur and Sri Brajamohan Deo of Kalahandi (along with the Kalahandi state Zamindars like Durga Madhab Singh of Madanpur Rampur, Maheswari Prasad Deo of Lanjigarh and Umashankar Deo of Jaipatna) were outstanding.

In the early thirties, my father, Sri B M Deo, thoroughly repaired the famous Bhubaneswar temple which was in ruins, at a colossal cost. The marble tablet in the temple speaks of the fact today. Sri P C Bhanj Deo of Mayurbhanj compiled the largest Oriya Lexicon.

The Orissa Province, with its high density of population, encouraged the exodus of a large number of Oriyas to migrate to Calcutta and Burma in search of employment opportunities. Today, Calcutta is the largest Oriya urban conglomeration. The Orissa State's vast mineral and forest wealth had great potentials for development. The Tata Iron and Steel Company, the biggest industrial complex of India,

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depends mostly on the iron mines of Mayurbhanj, the Manganese ores of Keonjhar and the limestones of the Gangpur state. Lately, large coalfields at Talcher besides exporting coal to South India and Western India have attracted many thermal stations and the Nalco factory. In Kalahandi and Koraput district, bauxite has created opportunities for development and the Rayagada Koraput railway line was laid. The forest wealth of the Orissa State (like timber and bamboo), along with valuable minor forest produce, like tendu (*bidi*) leaves and Sal seeds and gum, speaks the great natural wealth of this area.

The neighbouring poor province of Orissa, with high density of population and with hardly any income, cannot be denied its natural wealth unless it is under one administration. So, the Orissa leaders, with their covetous eyes on the neighbouring wealth, could not appreciate the idea of 'federation of states' as contemplated under the 1935 Government of India Act. They instigated and financed the Prajamandal Movement, which took advantage of the misrule prevailing in some states. It instigated the people to demand full and responsible government, since they, in the province, were enjoying provincial autonomy according to 1935 Government of India Act. The lust for power and oppressive measures by the rulers in some states caught the imagination of the people and ignited the peaceful movement of Satyagraha which erupted into violence in spite of precept and sermons. This will be dealt later.

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Chapter II

MY FATHER'S REIGN AND THE CLOUDS OF WORLD WAR II

My father, Maharaja B M Deo, lost his father when he was eighteen months old. He was the only child and successor to the Kalahandi Gaddi. His life was in constant danger due to so many so-called claimants to the Gaddi. That was the reason why he was kept under the strict protection of his mother and grandmothers. They even accompanied him to Raipur for his schooling at Raj Kumar College and permanently settled there in a rented house till his education was over. I am the third child of my parents. The elder ones were sisters, one of whom died prematurely. The birth of a male child was a great occasion for the family and for the people of the state who celebrated it with great jubilation in every village. In 1919, there was a worldwide epidemic of influenza in which many people died. That year also witnessed famine in the state. Besides starting many relief works, like construction of various roads and digging tanks, my father took the occasion of the birth of an heir apparent to abolish the pernicious *Bethi* (forced labour) and 'Beggar' (the free supply of coolies and ration to touring officers) in the state. The Kalahandi state was the only state in Orissa before India became independent where there was no *Bethi* system. In other Princely States of Orissa, the villagers were asked to work for the state for various projects like road construction, building of schools, public offices and the palace of the ruler without any wages after harvesting. This created a hardship for the people who rose

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in revolt against the establishment in the Prajamandal Movement of the late thirties. The *Bethi* was the main reason for anti-Ruler agitation, which spread like wild fire all over the states of Orissa. Kalahandi was the only state where there was no Prajamandal Movement.

As my father was completely isolated from the people of Kalahandi in his early childhood, he tried his best to keep a close rapport with them and initiated many progressive measures. In 1921, he completed the third land settlement of the Kalahandi state with a complete survey. He ordered the preparation of village land maps and individual holdings with a record of rights of the tenants, *Gountias* and other village functionaries. He abolished rent in kind and introduced rent in cash. In this regard, Kalahandi was far ahead of the adjoining Koraput district, where even the first land settlement was not completed until 1946. By this time I had started the fourth land settlement of the state. In Koraput, land revenue used to be collected in kind, i.e. in grain and people had no record of rights. Nor were their lands demarcated till the sixties of this century.

In Kalahandi state, the village functionaries were the chowkidars. They had a close connection with the local police and used to report happenings in the village on every seventh day in the police station. They would also report the visit of outsiders to the village as also the births and deaths, etc. The jhankar also received free land like the chowkidar in order to worship the village deities and to participate in the community functions of the villagers. Invariably, he was an *adivasi,* i.e. a Kandh or a Gond or a Sabar.

The village Naria, where invariably a cattleman received land to look after 'the Hazari Ghar', i.e. the village guesthouse is for the accommodation of any outsider or state official. He used to supply drinking water and cooked food for the incoming guest. The *Gountias* used to have

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their bhogras, i.e. rent-free lands. They used to collect land revenue and annually deposit it in the State Treasury. They looked after the maintenance of the Anabadi and Gocher lands and helped the State Government in fighting fire hazards in the village or in the adjoining forests. They helped the police in stopping criminal activities or in rounding up the criminals. The Bhogra system was abolished in the fifties when the Orissa Government employed Tahsildars and Patwaries for revenue collection. Noting the frequency of the annual feature of fires in the straw structures in all villages, my father ordered all houses to have Naria tile roofs. Even the poorest of the poor had a tiled roof. Free timber like rafters, pillars, doors, etc. were given from the state forest. There have been no fire hazards in the Kalahandi district to date. This is all due to the foresight of Maharaja Braja Mohan Deo.

The establishment of a large number of primary schools, middle and high schools, scholarships for higher education, the training of deserving students in various technical fields so that they could become heads of departments in the administration, have avoided the problems of educated unemployment. My father constructed many minor and major bridges. The railway came to the state during his time. He opened many hospitals, brought electricity to the Bhawanipatna town in 1923, and arranged for pipe water supply in 1924. A Municipal Committee served the civil life of the town. Crimes were ruthlessly suppressed by his iron hand. Inter-provincial dacoits were caught in the state. Perfect peace prevailed. Corruption in the bureaucracy was unthinkable. Complaints were immediately enquired into personally and the culprits brought to book. The palace door remained open twenty-four hours for the people to express their grievances. Even today, my father is known as 'the maker of the modern Kalahandi'.

My father also made it a point to visit all the 2000 odd

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villages once every year (mostly on horseback) and personally took interest in the grievances of the people. He was in the High Court and could pass death sentences. As a sovereign, he could also exercise his mercy to commute death sentences. The sessions judge and other courts used to look after the judicial administration of the state. The Dewan was the executive head.

I had the opportunity of touring with my father when I was growing up. In 1924, he abolished *bahabandha* (bonded labour system) which was prevalent in the villages. The landlords would give some money as advance to a field worker who could never pay it back. The capital went on multiplying along with the prohibitive compound interest. He and all his descendants would work for generations as slaves, with only food to eat and two pieces of cloth a year. My father wrote off all such loans taken from the landlords, and made the labourers and their families free from their bondage. Many a time, while my father used to be on horseback, hundreds of such free labourers used to prostrate themselves before him shouting 'Maharaja Brajamohan Deo Ki Jai'. All these welfare measures attracted the attention of the British Government, and the hereditary 'Maharaja' title was conferred on him.

Though a student of Raipur Rajkumar College, my father did not like the system of education there. And that too, in spite of the fact that Kalahandi was the second biggest donor of the institution, next to Nandgaon. He wanted to bring me up as a commoner. I had a private tutor, and I passed out from the Bhawanipatna High School in 1933 at the age of thirteen. As my father wanted me to grow up rubbing shoulders with commoners, there was tremendous pressure from political agents to enrol me at Rajkumar College, Raipur. As I was a sickly boy, with chronic tonsillitis, my father gave the excuse that I would go to Raipur when my health improved. I was treated in

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Calcutta and my tonsil was removed. When I passed my matriculation from the local High School in 1933, there was no necessity for me to go to Raipur as the Raj Kumar College taught up to matric only.

From 1933 to 1937, I studied in Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, where I completed my graduation. In 1936, the Orissa Province was formed. I was present at the durbar held at the Ravenshaw College Hall where Sir John Hubback took oath as first Governor of Orissa on the 1 April 1936. There was a good deal of controversy about the location of the provincial capital. Rangailunda (near Gopalpur in Ganjam district) was the most favoured site as land was available and the climate was conducive. The people of Cuttack wanted Cuttack to be the provincial capital, even though the city was overcrowded and there was hardly any space to have the Secretariat and other paraphernalia of a state capital. Since most of the intelligentsia in Orissa belong to Cuttack, and as *The Samaj*, the only Oriya daily paper was published there, public opinion was swayed in favour of Cuttack. As there was no Assembly Hall, the Orissa Assembly used to sit in the hall of the Ravenshaw College. This continued till 1952. The Assembly decided to have the capital at Cuttack (Chaudwar) but this never materialised. We, as students, had the opportunity to visit the galleries of the Assembly and listen to the debates. Though there was limited franchise, the first general election in the province was held in 1936. The elections were very interesting to watch from a distance. I can still visualise the nostalgic panorama of posters and banners, and voters being wooed by feasts and rasagollas at Cuttack, when Sarala Devi and Latika Devi fought in the election. I remember with amusement the various satirical songs sung during the elections. Out of fifty-six elected members of the Orissa Legislative Assembly, the Utkal Province Congress Committee

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contested thirty-seven seats, out of which thirty-six won. In spite of the lack of resources, it was the tireless efforts of Pandit Neelakantha Das, the then PCC President who was responsible for this. Out of the five provinces in the country where the Congress had a clear majority, none could achieve the amount of success that Pandit Das delivered. Even though the Congress was in a majority, it shirked the responsibility of the government. An interim Ministry was formed under the Prime Ministership of Maharaja Krushna Chandra Deb Gajapati of Parlakhemundi. He was assisted by two ministers. However, in June 1937, when the then Governor General clarified that the Governor (being the constitutional head) would not interfere in the administration and with the administrator, the ministers advised that, to foster mutual goodwill and implement the Congress election manifesto, the Congress should form the government. Biswanath Das was the Prime Minister with two ministers, i.e. N Kanungo and Bodhram Dube. The Parlakhemundi Ministry resigned. Even then there was always a tussle between the ministry and the provincial Congress organisation on various points. The nine-member group of the dissidents in the Congress Assembly was led by Pandit Godavarish Mishra.

We, as students then, intimately watched the gathering dark clouds in the international political horizon for another World War. It was greatly amusing to us to notice how the British Parliament behaved itself under the Prime Ministership of Baldwin when Edward, the VIII, the then Prince of Wales, abdicated his claim to the British Crown having decided to marry one Mrs Wallis Sympson, an American divorcee.

In the meantime, the League of Nations proved itself to be a futile debating society, unable to solve any international disputes or to stop the aggression of the bigger powers over the less fortunate states. When China protested the

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Japanese's seizure of Manchuria in 1931 and its southward subsequent expansion in China, the League was satisfied, accepting at face value the assurance from the Japanese that they were merely restoring law and order. Having walked out from the League in 1933, Hitler repudiated the Versailles Treaty and built a mighty war machine by enforcing conscription. He later occupied the demilitarised Rhine land. The League did not even chastise him. This whetted his appetite further to gulp Austria and Czechoslovakia by instigating internal trouble and then taking over on the pretext of restoring order. The mere threat of force made him master of the greater part of Europe. In Italy, Benito Mussolini marched with 500 thousand soldiers equipped with latest weapons and supported by tanks and air force into Africa's sole independent country Ethiopia (Abyssinia). Not a little finger was raised in protest. Although the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare said that the British Government would be second to none in fulfilling the intentions of the League of Nations for collective resistance to all unprovoked aggressions, Britain and France acquiesced in the status quo. But the real fear lay in being a silent spectator to the Italian aggressive mood for it seemed that the Duce might spread the mad war to the European continent. I remember the day (30 June 1936) when, after the collapse of the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, Haile Selassie, the conquering Lion of Judah, the Elect of God, King of Kings, the Emperor of Ethiopia, spoke in the League of Nations in a passionate appeal for intervention. But alas, nothing happened even though the emperor had concluded his speech by saying; 'It is us today. It will be you tomorrow.'

After the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, Marxism was firmly entrenched under communist rule. Although it was difficult to know of the happenings behind the iron curtain,

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news leaked out of massacre of opposition leaders for the establishment of one party dictatorial rule in the name of proletariats. At the same time, we heard of experiments regarding collective farming and the abolition of private ownership of property. Even the last Emperor, Nicholas II (of the Romanov line) and his family were shot and killed inside a prison cell. We were disturbed to learn that Stalin, the Soviet Dictator, was destroying every vestige of suspected dissent. Some were subjected to 'Show Trial', i.e. making confession of treason under torture or psychological duress. Some were sent to Siberia labour camps, and the less fortunate were shot by firing squads. These gruesome events during the Stalin regime were unfolded by President Khrushchev, and later by Presidents Gorbachev and Yeltsin. These experiments in Russia received mixed reactions in the free world. The youth, believing in socialist ideologies, upheld the happenings while the democrats disliked the process.

The Civil War in Spain in 1936 was, more or less, a dress rehearsal of the events to take place in World War II. The Soviet Union backed the Republican Government while Nazi Germany and Facist Italy sent men and war material to Gen. Franco where the latest weapons and combat tactics were used. The United States, Britain and France stood aloof. Thirty-three months of Civil War ended with General Franco returning victorious and establishing a military government. After Franco's rule, kingship was restored in Spain and the present King is H M Juan Carlos, who recently visited India. 1938 saw the Haripura Congress and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was its President. In 1939, Subhash Chandra Bose, even though ill and bedridden, defeated Sri Pattabhi Sitaramayya. Gandhiji took the defeat to be his own. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose identified himself with total dedication to the youth and for his fiery nationalism, he caught the imagination of the

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nation and he was a great favourite when I was studying law in the Patna Law College. The victory of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose was a great morale booster to all of us and the celebration at Patna was a very big event. However, having differences with Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Rajendra Prasad, Subhash Chandra Bose resigned from the Indian National Congress and formed the Forward Block. Sri Hari Vishnu Kamath, former ICS and Collector of Hoshangabad in CP was his Secretary. He was my colleague in the Lok Sabha for ten years. After Netaji's resignation in 1940, the Ramgarh Congress elected Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as its President. Maulana Azad steered the Congress through the Quit India Movement, negotiating with the British Cabinet Mission from 1935 to 1949.

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Chapter III

MY ACCESSION AND THE PRAJAMANDAL MOVEMENT IN THE STATE

In 1937, I graduated from Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Through the good offices of my tutor Professor K P Sinha, I got a seat in the Trinity College, Cambridge and was planning to pursue my higher studies in England. But my ambition was laid to rest because of my father's ailing health. In Europe, war clouds were gathering. These provided enough ground to my father to discourage me in my plans. He sent me to Patna to do my Master's in Economics and a Bachelor in Law simultaneously. We had a set of brilliant professors in the Economics Department of Patna College. After passing the Part-I examination in Law, I opted to do the Part-II examination in Law in the second year. Law was comparatively an easier subject, and in 1939 I easily passed the Bachelor of Law Examination. I continued my sixth year of MA till August 1939 when I was recalled to Bhawanipatna for the sudden serious illness of my father.

I was not allowed to go out for shikar until I passed my BA. Later, I used to spend vacations at home, going out for shikar and taking part in the various games at Bhawanipatna. In 1937, there was a human kill near Bhawanipatna by a tiger. My father took me out to the machan and there was a beat and my father came away. In the beat, a pair of tigers (male and female) came and I shot both the man-eaters. My father was extremely happy. In all,

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I have shot forty-nine tigers of which nearly forty were man-eaters.

The two years in Patna were fully utilised by playing various outdoor games, particularly tennis and football. In the New Patna Club, I took coaching in tennis from a French Coach procured by Mr P R Das, the leading advocate of Patna. After the French Coach went away, I took lessons from Mr Noor Mohammed, a resident of Peshawar, who had won the All India Professional Tennis Championship consecutively for three years. He is an excellent Tennis Coach. In football, I represented my college. At that time, throughout India, the political climate was tense. The radical action of the youth and the patriotism of Subhash Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru caught the imagination of the nation.

The 1926, the Lahore Congress Resolution of Poorna Swaraj, and Gandhiji's passivism, charming personality and rhetorical oratory made him the ideal of the youth, who by then were impatient to make India free. This was more so after the Congress had gained power and formed the government in provinces having accepted the provincial autonomy under the Government of India Act of 1935.

At that time, students were organising Students Unions among themselves in Patna. In the Students Union Election, I took active interest and my friends made their classmate Sri Indradeep Narayan Sinha, a radical, to stand against Sri Viswanath Verma, a relation of Dr Rajendra Prasad. The entire election campaign was extremely exciting. Indradeep won by a big margin and it was the day of great jubilation for all of us. Much later, Indradeep joined the Communist Party of India and became a member of the Rajya Sabha for two consecutive terms when I was a member of Lok Sabha.

In Orissa, the Prajamandal Movement had already started in the Indian States. It gathered momentum when

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the Congress came to power in Orissa, after the resignation of Parlakhemundi Ministry. The Congress leaders in Orissa Province fully supported the agitation by infiltrating into the adjoining states, by financial support, and by incessant propaganda in the local papers published from Cuttack. The main plank of the Prajamandal Movement was the prevalent ignoble oppressive *Bethi* system (i.e: forced labour where state subjects were asked to do manual labour in the non-agricultural season). In Talcher, the massive stone compound wall around the Rani Park was constructed by *Bethi* without payment. The Dhenkanal Pattayat Sri N P Singh Deo, the then Chief Minister, constructed a huge palace on a hill in Dhenkanal town known as 'Jatan Nagar'. It is a conspicuous landmark and an embodiment of *Bethi*. The 'Jatan Nagar' was profusely used in Oriya literature as a symbol of oppression. This magnificent mansion, built by the sweat and tears of the subjects, became a cursed house and the Pattayat Saheb hardly stayed there for twenty days. He was dismissed from state service and banished from the state by his elder brother Raja Sri S P Singh Deo in 1936-37 after all the allegations of oppression were proved correct. This decision delayed due to fraternal affection, was the subject of criticism of the Dhenkanal administration. By that time, Raja Sankar Pratap was passing through great mental strain and emotional conflict having no son or any heir to the Dhenkanal Gaddi.

A note written by the Raja in his personal diary is interesting. 'Being completely misunderstood and feeling hurt by the paramount power for not acting as the custodian of his *ijjat* or self-respect, (he had noted in his own hand in his note book) out of disgust that having no children or hope of a child and having no desire of adoption he hoped to lead a secluded life being loyal to the British Crown, even with a paltry personal pension of Rs3,000 per month. He further stated that if a successor to the Gaddi was to be

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nominated by him, he suggested the name of Raj Kumar S P Singh Deo (Nini Saheb) as his successive ruler.'

During their college days at Cuttack, the Dhenkanal brothers had their guardian advocate in Janakinath Bose, father of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. They were all friends and their friendship continued even afterwards. In 1937, Raja S P Singh Deo was chosen by the British Government to lead the Indian contingent to the World Scout Jamboree held in Holland. The Rani Saheba who was the chief girl guide of the state, also represented India. They stayed together in the same hotel with Lord and Lady Baden Powell. Dhenkanal had a very good set of eminent officers who rose to the highest level in their respective departments in Orissa state after the merger. In this state there was no corruption then and justice used to be readily available.

As I said earlier, the oppressive *Bethi* system was abolished in Kalahandi by my father in 1919, the year I was born. The more important demand was for a fully responsible government where the state people would decide their own destiny with the ruler as a constitutional head. The plea of the Prajamandal boomeranged in 1947 when these states merged in Orissa Province. On 13 October 1949, Sri Sarangadhara Das, MP, stated in the Constituent Assembly in India, 'I have a feeling that the Government at the Centre and also most of the members from the Province have a stepmotherly feeling towards the people of the states.' This would become evident from what has happened about the merged states. Why and how did this happen? It happened because on 1 January 1948, Sri Moni Guha, Administrator of ex-Gangpur State, Sri Durga Prasad Tripathy, Administrator of ex-Talcher State (and others like them) sent telegrams to Sri H K Mahatab, the Prime Minister of Orissa which said: CONQUEST COMPLETED AND ANNEXATION PEACEFUL.

On the same day, at Kharswan, nearly 2,000 local people

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were killed by Orissa Police force. In Chapter I, I have mentioned that the system of Government in the Princely States varied from advanced administration in states like Mysore to oppressive autocratic rule in some states where instances of squandering state treasury for ruler's personal luxury and intimidating the people in various sadistic whims were prevalent.

The agitators demanded full rights for the people over the state forests in which they wanted to cut wood and collect forest products without any restriction. Their plea was that the ruler never planted the forest. They were God's gift to be freely enjoyed by the people. The Orissa states had a very efficient Forest Advisor in an Irish man named Dr H F Mooney who had prepared a working plan for the state forests with a period of thirty years cycle, for rejuvenation of the forest growth. According to the Nistar forest rules, the people were free to draw firewood and bamboo for their own use. Licences to cut timber of prohibited species were liberally given for building houses, etc. I have yet to find a Forest Officer like Dr Mooney who covered the entire area on foot risking his life among wild animals, malaria and blackwater fever with a missionary zeal. His note on Orissa State Forest is till today a Bible for the Orissa Forest Officers.

When today I see a complete denudation of those vast forests, the barren hills, the massive soil erosion resulting in the silting of river beds and aggravating the flood menace during rains, the consequential dwindling annual rainfall, the fast approaching semi-desert condition within a period of the last fifty years, I cannot believe myself. Though in Kalahandi hill areas shifting cultivation (Dongar Chas) was practiced by the tribals, it was restricted only to the foothills, at best up to 1/3rd of the hill portion with 2/3rd of the top portion to be completely preserved to stop soil erosion. This law was emphatically carried out by an

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efficient Forest Officer named Mr P V Ramanna Rao.

The other demands of the Prajamandal Movement were rather petty ones. These were immediately conceded. But the intention of the instigators was not for a settlement but to keep the fire of this discontentment alive by fuelling fresh demands. These were opposition 'to the federation of Princely States with India' as envisaged under 1935 Government of India Act. The momentum of the State People Movement was being monitored and instigated by the provincial Congress leaders in Orissa. It spread like wildfire in the adjoining states like Nilgiri, Dhenkanal, Talcher, Nayagarh, Khandapara, Ranpur, etc.

Its activities were declared unlawful by the respective durbar administrations. As a result the tension in those states was raised to the highest pitch. Firing by the police force was resorted to in Dhenkanal and Talcher, which created bad blood between the ruler and their people. It resulted in mass exodus of state subjects to British India. For the Talcher refugees, the Orissa Congress organised a camp at Kosala near Angul, which was visited by All India Congress Leaders such as Babu Rajendra Prasad and Professor N G Ranga. Sri H K Mahatab writes in his history book, 'On the 5 January 1939, huge crowds gathered before the Ranpur Raja's palace from all over the state and demanded immediate release of the Prajamandal leaders arrested. The rulers wired to the political agent Major Bazelgette camping in neighbouring Nayagarh seeking his assistance. Major Bazelgette who was consulting with the Ranpur Raja came out of the palace to meet the people. All of a sudden, he was attacked by the mob. He then fired his revolver and killed a man. Major Bazelgette, the Political Agent for Orissa state was murdered in Ranpur in 1939 during the Prajamandal agitation. It created a good deal of stir. Two of the accused were sentenced to death and about twenty were given life imprisonment.'

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At that time, Sri H K Mahatab was a member of the Congress Working Committee. Mahatma Gandhi, who sympathised with the movement, issued clear instructions that in case of Satyagraha inside the states, no outside volunteers should be sent there. In spite of this, Sri Mahatab has categorically admitted that Congressites and Socialist leaders of the province fully supported the agitation, actively associated themselves with the movement, and did send agents to the neighbouring states.

I have deliberately refrained from adding the title of 'Dr' to H K Mahatab since I know for certain that he was not even a graduate and could not qualify for a doctorate. This honour was given to him as *honoris causa* by the Andhra University because he agreed to honour the Jeypore Maharaja's annual donation of Rs1.00 lakh to Andhra University. He immediately stopped this after he was conferred with this honour of 'Doctorate'. In this way, we come across instances of Mahatab's gullibility in public life.

As it is clear from his book, the whole movement was inspired from Cuttack by Sri Mahatab. His strategy was that the state people should demand so much that they can never be satisfied. The intention was not to have any settlement, in spite of several talks.

The news of Bazelgette's death came as a bolt from the blue and caused a shiver in the spine of those who swore by non-violence. It led to heart-searching as the Enquiry Committee reported 'even after a fortnight of Maj. Bazelgette's murder, a section of local politicians and agitators, so far from expressing any regret, consider that the political agent deserved his death.' I was attending to my ill father at Calcutta when the news of Bazelgette's death broke out on the 6th of January 1939. My father's advice to me was to always be with the people with whom our association was for nine hundred years.

Psychoanalysis will prove that a poor state like Orissa

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could not have the means to meet both ends for the minimum needs of a bare administration, to say nothing of a separate High Court or a University or even a Provincial State Public Service Commission. Though Orissa was separate it had to abolish one district. Angul was attached to Cuttack district as a Subdivision and Phulbani being tagged to Ganjam district as another subdivision. For minimum administrative purposes, Orissa was tagged with Bihar.

By that time, Burma was separated from India and the Orissa labour who used to migrate to Rangoon could not get the opportunity to go for employment. In Calcutta, all the menial jobs were monopolised by the Oriya labour. There also the scope was limited. The presence of vast natural resources nearby, coupled with the Prajamandal Agitation were adequate grounds to whet the appetite of the Orissa leaders, to grab the states and rule as conquerors of a colonial economy. Subsequent events will unfold Mahatab's revengeful vandalism in the post-merger area.

It is gratifying to note that there was no Prajamandal in Kalahandi. No reference anywhere was even made. However, the Secretary of All India State People's Conference came to Cuttack in June 1938 and at Mahatab's instance, a State People's Enquiry Committee was formed by that coterie. The Committee included, besides Balwantrai Mehta, H K Mahatab, Lalmohan Pattanaik and Sarangadhar Das.

Sarangadhar Das of Dhenkanal was the President of the Orissa State People's Conference, i.e. the Prajamandal. Though the Enquiry Committee brought out a report narrating various instances of maladministration and forced labour (*Bethi*) prevailing in various states, in the paragraph dealing with Kalahandi they passed strictures such as the area was full of jungle (which I think is a plus point and has assured heavy rainfall), and that the land revenue was high, though it is much less than prevailing in British India,

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particularly in Koraput district where the Land Revenue or Sistu used to be collected as rent in kind, i.e. in paddy.

It is interesting to note that most of the leaders of the All India State People's Conference like Sarangadhar Das, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, Sheikh Abdulla and many others were very close to their respective rulers, and their higher education was entirely financed by them.

I must say that in the thirties because of the guarantee of support of the paramount power to the rulers against external aggression and internal commotion, these rulers lost their personal contact with their people. Their survival depended more on the British help rather than their people's goodwill. Most of them had lost the qualities of inherent natural leadership.

This period witnessed a troubled international scene with dark clouds of the Second World War and mounting tension in Europe. Like the fomenting Prajamandal Movement in the States from Orissa Province, Hitler created general unrest in Austria and Czechoslovakia by sending his fifth column who were pro-Nazi. By this time, Hitler had already sounded Mussolini. So after the annexation of Austria, Feuher sent Prince Phillip of Hesse to Duce and got the report by phone from him that Duce had assented in a very friendly manner. Hitler replied, 'Please tell Mussolini. I will never forget him for this. Never... Never... Never... I shall stick with him whatever may happen, even if the whole world gangs up on him.'

The crowning irony of pre-war efforts was to appease Hitler. Britain and France were least interested in being dragged in a further war. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement ended in a complete failure. Being emboldened by his adventures, Hitler sent his Foreign Minister Von Rebentrop to get his consent on his attack on Poland. Russia was to join later and divide the goodwill amongst themselves.

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In August 1939, Rebentrop in Moscow hammered out a mutual non-aggression pact between Russia and Germany which freed Hitler to invade Poland. It also allowed Stalin to move to Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Rumania and the Eastern half of Poland. Only the non-aggression pact was publicly announced. The rest was kept in a secret protocol.

The collusion of Hitler with Stalin became clear when, on 18 September 1939, the actual meeting of German and Russian Armies took place in the final closing of their pincers in Brest Litovask. They could not fool the world by stating that troops had been sent to Poland to undertake the task of restoring peace and order.

Like Mahatab's Orissa, the government was forcefully taking over Nilgiri state administration on a similar pretext in 1947.

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Chapter IV

MY ADMINISTRATION, 1939-1947

Though I ascended the Kalahandi throne on 11 September 1939, I was absolutely raw regarding administration. My father's dewan, Sri B B Mohanty, used to take me to all the offices and I used to stay there for hours to personally see to the various branches of administration. The heads of departments used to enlighten me by giving me a performa of their various activities and I found their work quite interesting. In the meantime, the political agent called on me during the mourning period of my father's death and settled the date for my investiture at a durbar to be held at Bhawanipatna where the Resident of the Eastern States would present me a sword on behalf of the paramount power. He further suggested that, as I had just completed my education, I should go to some advanced Indian States where I could get first hand knowledge of the state's administration. I told the political agent that I didn't stand on the formalities of being presented a sword as my father already had many swords. I could wear any one for the durbar. At that time, I suggested that I would opt to go to Mysore state for my administrative training since I had read quite a lot about the advanced administration of Mysore state which had a broad-minded Maharaja being assisted by an able Dewan, Sir Mirza Ismail.

After some time, I received a letter from the Political Department that since I was already a Law Graduate, as a special case, my investiture would take place even though I was nineteen years old because the practice prevalent then

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was that until the ruler was twenty-one, the state used to be administered by a court of wards. They waived the age bar in my case and thought that there was no necessity for any administrative training as a copy of the Annual Administration Report used to be sent to the Political Department. The investiture ceremony (which was to take place in a durbar held in Bhawanipatna on 18 February 1940) was postponed to 16 March 1940, as I had an attack of chickenpox. It was attended to by Lt. Col. Barton, the then British Resident in Calcutta and all the five zamindars and prominent citizens. This unusual step was most probably taken by the paramount power since Kalahandi state had a very good reputation under the able administration of my father, and there was no local discontentment. However, on an auspicious day before February, I had the Rajyabhishek performed at the ancestral stone at Jugsaipatna, where all my ancestors were coroneted sitting on the lap of the Kandha leader, the Patmajhi of Merkul. It coincides with the installation of the association of the tribal Bhil leader during the coronation of Bapa Rawal as the first king of Mewar. The turban used to be tied by the Patraja of Rampur.

Since Rampur Zamindari had already been escheated to the parent Kalahandi state when the late Patraja Sri Moti Singh died issueless without leaving any heir, the turban was tied on my head by the eldest Zamindar Sri Maheswari Prasad Deo of Lanjigarh who was later given the title of 'Patraja' by me.

My father had his Constitutional Advisor in Sri K C Neogy, a bright barrister of Calcutta who at that time was the dewan of Mayurbhanj state. In later years, after India became independent, he became a cabinet minister in Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's Cabinet, which post he later resigned along with Sri Shyama Prasad Mukherjee after two years of differences with the Prime Minister on the

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rehabilitation of the East Bengal refugees. After my father's death, he came to Bhawanipatna and stayed with us till the process of my succession was completed. At his instance, Maharaja Sri Pratap Chandra Bhanj Deo of Mayurbhanj invited me to Baripada to attend the Chhou Festival in 1940. I took the occasion to visit Baripada and stayed there for fifteen days. I looked into the various branches of Mayurbhanj state administration. On my way back from Baripada by train, I first met Sri Harekrushna Mahatab at Vizianagaram station and requested him to travel in my compartment up to Kesinga as he was going to attend the Congress Working Committee meeting at Wardha. The conversation between us was very friendly. After that I did not meet him till 1947.

In 1941, I married Smt Kasturika Modini Debi, the only daughter of Gajapati Maharaja Ramachandra Deb of Puri. He had two sons and one daughter. She died on 23 September 1983. We had a very happy married life. We had two daughters (Raj Kumari Krishna Debi married to Brig. Raja Kamakhya Prasad Singh Deo of Dhenkanal and Raj Kumari Gitanjali Debi married to Raja Manavendra Singh Chauhan of Sanjeli) and two sons (Jubraj Udit Pratap Deo married to Princess Padma Manjari Debi of Mayurbhanj and Patait Bikram Keshari Deo married to Princess Nayan Shree Debi of Puri). They are well educated, prosperous and well settled in life.

I continued to administer this ancient state till 1 January 1948, when on receiving the call of Sardar Patel, after India had been truncated by partition, I merged Kalahandi state with the dominion of India to build a democratic and a more prosperous integrated India. This period of my administration of seven and half years was quite exciting and eventful.

To discuss various problems of common interest, the rulers of Eastern States Agency used to meet under the

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auspices of the Council of Rulers of Eastern States Agency. I had the privilege of attending the Council Meeting in March 1940 in Calcutta at Tripura House under the Presidentship of Maharaja B B Manikya Bahadur of Tripura. I happened to be the youngest ruler in that conference, and was the most educated among the rulers then and took active part in its deliberations. At that time Britain was fighting a grim war with Germany. Various matters came up for discussion including the state's offer of assistance to the British in their crisis, administrative reforms and various co-operative projects by which the states could improve their economic sources and establish such institutions like common High Court, Engineering College, Medical College, etc.

I found a common awareness among the rulers that the time had come to associate their people in the administration of their states and train them gradually in the democratic set up. Their ultimate aim was a responsible government of the people, with the ruler as the constitutional monarch who would be guaranteed with an assured income to maintain a lifestyle according to the status of the states. According to the Sanand's and Treaties with the British, the states were classified into three categories viz. 'A' class, 'B' class and 'C' class. 'A' class rulers exercised full sovereign rights except in foreign affairs. They could pass life sentences and had extradition agreements with the British government to call for the accused from British India to be tried in their courts for crime committed in the states, and vice versa. 'B' class rulers judicial power was restricted to that of a District and Session Judge. 'C' class rulers could exercise judicial powers up to that of a first class magistrate. These were all creations of the British government. So also the protocol with the paramount power varied according to the class of states. Gun salutes were awarded only to the saluted rulers. This distinction

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was observed even in the representation in the chamber of princes. There were only six saluted rulers in the Eastern States Agency, i.e. Tripura, Coochbihar, Kalahandi, Mayurbhanj, Patna and Sonepur, who were members of the Chamber of Princes in their own rights, whereas the other states were represented in the Chamber of Princes by representatives elected among themselves. But in the Council of Rulers, we never observed this distinction. Each ruler had a vote.

The Council of Rulers also had a Council of Ministers who used to go in detail into the various administrative and political problems. They would then submit their reports to the Council of Rulers who used to take a decision and recommend it to the various states. Some states used to take action on those recommendations and some threw them in their waste paper baskets.

Since it was the unanimous feeling that the state people should be associated in the administrative machinery, after the retirement of my father's dewan, Sri B B Mohanty and after a short span of Sri S K Srivastav's reign, I appointed a Council of Ministers consisting of the dewan, one official member and one unofficial member. The dewan was Rai Bahadur Umacharan Das, a retired senior officer of Bihar and Orissa provincial service. The other two were Sri P C Mohanty, District and Session Judge, and Patraja Sri Maheswari Prasad Deo of Lanjigarh. The portfolios were distributed. Then the Grama Sabha Order was promulgated to decentralise the local self-government. These Gram Sabhas were bigger panchayats than in the present context. At a later stage, they became the constituencies for election of members to the Kalahandi State Legislative Assembly.

In 1946, I inaugurated the Kalahandi State Legislative Assembly. A minister was elected by the Assembly to be responsible to the confidence of the State Assembly and having loyalty to the ruler. Sri Utsabanda Pradhan was the

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elected Minister when the nominated popular Minister Patraja M P Deo resigned. The portfolio of Control and Civil Supplies was allotted to him. The Assembly could pass any resolution on administrative reforms and send it to the Council of Ministers for implementation. The Council used to be presided by me. Thus, an honest attempt was made by me to educate the state people in the process of ultimately having a responsible government in the state.

I was functioning the High Court for Kalahandi state till 1946 when the rulers of Eastern States had a common High Court. Its headquarters were at Raigarh. The Chief Justice happened to be Justice Mohammed Ismail, the retired Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court who later became Pakistan's first High Commissioner for India after partition. For the separation of Judiciary and Executive in 1946, I appointed a district Magistrate and a district and Session Judge. Previously, these two jobs were combined and were being looked after by one incumbent.

The separation of judiciary and executive in Orissa came into effect as late as 1959 when Ganatantra Parishad joined the coalition government in Orissa. The Kalahandi State Bar was introduced by me and the first lawyer happened to be Sri Goura Chandra Panda, BA, BL. Exercising my power of clemency as the sovereign ruler of Kalahandi state, I commuted two death sentences passed by High Court on two condemned prisoners to life imprisonment.

For the better management of Forest and Agriculture in Eastern States Agency, a Board of Forestry and Agricology was created. I was its Chairman. We had a Director of Agriculture and a Director of Forestry. Sri H F Mooney was the Director of Forestry, for the Eastern States Agency and till today his inspection notes on the working plan and on the sylvicultural operations of the forest are followed by the Orissa Forest Department. The only natural sandalwood forest was in Thuamul Rampur and great effort was taken

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to protect it and develop it by having sandalwood plantation in the adjoining areas. State Bus Transport was introduced on all state highways connecting rail heads, business centres with state capitals, and with the interior. South Kalahandi, i.e. Kasipur area, was connected by motorable roads. Many man-eating tigers were killed by shikaris, one of whom was late Raja R C Deb of Puri who killed one tiger from my sports car near Chandragiri in Kashipur.

After the merger of the states, Dr H F Mooney joined the Orissa State Service as the Chief Conservator of Forests and retired after getting employment in the United Nations. Great attention was taken for the protection of wildlife. Black bucks roamed in the plains in thousands. In the Dongarla area, particularly in Thana Rampur and Kashipur, there was the great menace of man-eating tigers. The annual toll had been about 400 human lives. Great pain was taken to eliminate these man-eaters. During my administration, I shot forty such man-eaters.

As there was sufficient rainfall, we used to have bumper harvesting. Besides being self-sufficient in food, as per the report of the political agent, Cobden Ramsey, in the early two decades of this century and Col. Elliot in the last century, we used to export paddy. Kalahandi had a large number of irrigation tanks right from the ancient times. The administration also renovated all old tanks, which were full of silt.

Since there are thousands of such tanks, we used to renovate two to three tanks in a year. Large tanks like the Karunasagar in Kasurpada, Udesagar in Asurgarh and the Chhoriagarh Sagar, each watering more than 200 acres were completely silted. It took three to four years to renovate these three tanks, as the resources of the state were limited. The New Irrigation Project in the drought prone area of Siuni near Ampani, and the Patakabahali M I Project in the Saria area were successfully completed. In 1942 and 1943,

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Kalahandi state supplied 1,00,000 tonnes of rice to the famine striken Bengal Presidency. M/s Ispahani and Company (now in Pakistan) was given the sole procuring agency for the entire state. It engaged local sub-agents.

This was the beginning of the Control Department in the state. It looked after the procurement of paddy, the installation of cheap grain shops in different parts of the state. During the war, items like petrol, kerosene oil, sugar and cloth (which used to come from British India) were supplied to the state by the British government on a quota basis, according to its population. The supply department used to look after the distribution of these controlled items in the interiors. The number of graingollas was increased to a great extent in this period. They used to supply grains to the cultivators for seeds, and to meet their agricultural operations because the agricultural labourers used to be paid in kind at a fixed rate of eight kgs of paddy per female agricultural worker. Strong steps were taken to stop the illicit movement of rice from the state for which there were check posts at various outgoing points.

The price of rice was maintained at all costs. Till 1948, when the state merged, in Re1 one used to buy sixteen kgs of rice (four manas) in any weekly shanty in the state. One-fourth of the village area was exclusively reserved as *gochar* or grazing ground for cattle. It could not be allotted for any other purpose. At the moment, there is not an inch of *gochar* left in spite of the directives of the constitution for cattle welfare. Now all *Patra Jungles* of village forests are lost in spite of the social forestry department. They have planted bougainvillaea in adjoining Budharaja dongar.

To modernise agriculture in the state, I donated 150 acres of my own agricultural land in Arkabahali to start an agricultural demonstration farm and a dairy farm. This farm did immense work in the extension work of the latest agricultural and dairy operations. In the plateau area of

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Thana Rampur, coffee plantation was started on an experimental basis.

It did extremely well. Later on, in the seventies, the Indian Coffee Board recommended the entire South Kalahandi, Koraput and Phulbani districts for coffee cultivation. For promotion of sericulture, mulberry plantation was introduced in the jungle area. Tussar cultivation, practiced by the local Kostas in certain villages, was given impetus by organising a co-operative society for spinning and weaving tussar cloth by using improved handlooms. Cultivation of lac on the kusum trees, prevalent in the Jaipatna plain area, was re-organised and the monopoly system was discontinued. The state purchased the entire crop by paying the market price to the lac cultivators.

The existing dispensaries in the state were given a face-lift by providing operation theatres and the free distribution of medicines. In 1944, the miracle medicine, penicillin, was brought by me packed in ice from Bombay. Promising local students were trained as doctors at the cost of the state and were employed to man those dispensaries. The headquarters hospital at Bhawanipatna was improved by providing an X-ray ward and electric therapy facilities. A maternity ward under the supervision of qualified lady doctors was opened. We had a very efficient State Medical Officer in Dr P N Sarkar. The Bhawanipatna Hospital earned its great reputation because of his missionary zeal. It attracted patients from a radius of 150 miles. A fifty bedded TB Hospital was started in Uditnarayanpur. After the merger of the states in Orissa in 1948, this was the only TB Hospital in Orissa.

The Bhawanipatna High School was much improved by providing it with a modern building and a modern hostel. All the primary schools were provided with pukka and tiled buildings. All those students who passed out from the high

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school were given vocational training at the cost of the state. They were sent for higher training in Medicine, Engineering, Police, Forestry, Fishery, Mining and Geology, Judiciary and Administration, etc. It is a pleasure to see that some of them manned high responsible posts in various departments of the Government of Orissa. There was no problem for the educated unemployed to get jobs. I was fortunate to have a set of dedicated officers who were sincere in their jobs and we worked together as members of one family for the betterment of Kalahandi state. Corruption was practically nonexistent.

Whenever such instances were brought to notice, immediate action was taken, with exemplary punishment meted out to the concerned person. This was possible because I took great interest personally and visited all the central villages on horseback, at least once a year so that I could have direct rapport with the people of the 2,000 odd villages of the state.

During my extensive tours, I discovered the potential of the Indravati Multipurpose Hydro Electrical Project and personally visited various sites from where the Indravati water of the Godavari valley could be diverted to the Mahanadi basin over the Eastern Ghats to make an artificial water fall of 1200 feet and ultimately to irrigate the Kalahandi plains. In 1944, I engaged Mr Baxter, the then Retired Chief Engineer of Bombay Presidency, to give a preliminary report about the hydropower generation and irrigation potential of this project. Then I sent Sri Bhubaneswar Behera, a very bright and sincere student to be educated at the cost of the state at Patna Engineering College and then to pursue a postgraduate degree from Iowa University in USA. He specialised in Hydrology and the construction of dams and went for practical training in the Tennesy Valley Project. On his return Shri Behera took up the detailed investigation of the Indravati Project which

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saw the light of the day in 1978 when Prime Minister Morarji Desai laid the foundation stone and work started. Earlier, it was estimated to cost about 100 crores. But to provide such a big amount for Kalahandi state was impossible. Luckily our Mining and Geological Officer, Sri Sridhar Pattajoshi, found large deposits of bauxite ore on the hill tops of most of the hills known as 'Malis', in Kashipur, Karlapat, Thana Rampur and Jaipatna areas. Initial steps were taken to explore the bauxite deposits at Karlapat by floating a state owned company called 'Kalahandi Bauxite' in collaboration with a Calcutta party. It has been ascertained now that these huge deposits of bauxite, along with those in Panchapat Mali in Koraput, are one of the largest in Asia. As this new metal was considered to be the metal of the future, replacing iron in the building of aircrafts, etc. and as it was in great demand in the international market, we decided to wait till the end of the Second World War. We decided on a foreign collaboration to start this Indravati Project. It included bartering away the bauxite deposits of one of the hills in South Kalahandi. This, however, did not materialise as the states merged in India in 1948. With the escalation of prices, this project is now likely to cost more than 1200 crores. It is a pity that it took such a long time to start this most economically viable project in such a backward region. Various political reasons came in the way. It will irrigate 6.00 lakh acres of developed agricultural lands in its ayacut and will generate 600 MW of Hydroelectric Power, i.e. nearly three times of the power generated at Hirakud.

The state capital, Bhawanipatna was developed by a Town Planning Officer named Mr Leslie who was brought on a contract basis from Patna state. Areas were earmarked for playgrounds, parks, swimming pools, recreation centres and cinema houses. It is a pity that his plans were thrown away and new constructions came in the most haphazard

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way, encroaching on all open spaces reserved for parks and playgrounds and blocking the existing thorough fares by temporary constructions. Open space and parks are the lungs of the town.

Many Orissa officers have hardly any interest in the welfare of the local people. Thus, beautiful Bhawanipatna became a big slum without considering the posterity and the future. The State PWD roads have not been maintained and all communications to areas like Thana Rampur and Kashipur have became unapproachable from the district headquarters. Because of the lack of communication, Thana Rampur, which had the subdivision headquarters, was reduced to a tahsil. Later on, even this shifted to Kashipur one fine morning, in 1963, and on the plea that Kashipur is unapproachable from district headquarters, the Kashipur Police Station was taken away by the then Chief Minister, Sadasiv Tripathy, and attached to Koraput district from which he hails. And this was done even though Koraput district was bigger than Kerala state and is now split into four districts for administrative convenience. This happened even though its land laws and excise laws were quite different from those prevailing in Koraput district. I still believe that this was done for political reasons and because of the vast deposits of Bauxite existing in that area. Though the District Gazetteer of Kalahandi and Koraput (written by Sri N Senapati, ICS) says that it is for administrative convenience that the Kashipur area was taken out of Kalahandi, I hope that there will be provisions for all weather communication to Kashipur. This will help it to be attached to the Kalahandi district administration because these two areas, politically, ethnically, economically, emotionally and culturally were one entity since hundreds of years.

I threw open all the Hindu temples for worship to all classes of Hindus, including Harijans. The only Muslim

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mosque in Bhawanipatna was given land for its maintenance. The Sikh Gurudwara was given a prominent place in the heart of the town and sufficient agricultural land to sustain it. There was no communal tension. All festivals were celebrated and everybody participated. There was complete communal harmony among all sections of the communities. Each village has its own Gram Devata, which used to be worshipped by the *Pujhari* or *Jhankar* (a tribal). For the maintenance of the temple and for the remuneration of the *Pujhari*, *maufi* grants of land were given.

Maufi land was also given in every village to the village chowkidar or *Gonda* who mostly used to be a Harijan. He used to attend the police station or the outpost weekly and report on all events in the village. He was the ears and the eyes of the administration, and was provided with a uniform and a spear as a status symbol. Every village had a *Hazri Ghar*, i.e. the communal guesthouse, where any outsider or visitor could get shelter. For the comforts of the guest, and to supply water and food, *maufi* land was given to a *Naria* (a water carrier). During the war period, the movement of outsiders was checked. A guest book used to be maintained in the *Hazari Ghar*, and used to be sent to the police station along with the chowkidar every week. The *Gountia* or the village headman was to collect land revenue from the tenants and pay it to the Tahsildar in two instalments.

The lands of the *adivasis* and *harijans* could not be settled with any other caste. Previous permission was necessary if anyone wanted to settle the vacant land to any of his relations. For this work, the *Gountias* used to enjoy *maufi*, *bhogra* land as service tenure. There were some oppressive *Gountias* who had been dismissed by state administration. Villagers used to get free firewood from the village forest and on licence from the reserve forest for house building, the manufacture of bullock carts and agricultural

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implements. These licences were free and used to be given even for prohibited species like *teak, sal* and *bija*. For their forest rights, the villagers were to pay Nistar at a nominal rate. My village administration was well appreciated. Local police officers, though untrained, earned appreciation and were rewarded by the adjoining district administrations for capturing notorious inter-provincial gangs of dacoits and absconders from the army.

In the field of culture, the contribution of Kalahandi State is not insignificant. For the best Oriya writer, an annual prize was given by the state and many eminent Oriya writers have been awarded this prize. The State Printing Press took up the printing of various unpublished Oriya books and other unpublished old manuscripts written originally on palm leaves. In the field of sports, the state had very high standards in football, cricket, tennis, etc. as the best All India Coaches were employed by the state to give coaching in various games. Kalahandi was pioneer in Orissa so far as cricket was concerned, as it was played for more than ninety years at Bhawanipatna. Maharaja B M Deo started this game which was immensely popular with Sri Rama Naidu as the first Cricket Coach in the twenties. We had Mr Abraham, Mr Razdan and Mr Parekh in later years.

In my father's memory, I instituted the memorial silver trophy for the best team in inter-district cricket. It is known as the Kalahandi Cup. In tennis, we had India's top professional coach Mr Noor Mohammed. Many eminent Oriya writers were given sufficient grants to publish their writings. For promotion of dance, drama and music, Kalahandi also contributed its quota. The state maintained high-class theatre with a dramatic troupe and orchestra party. The local *ghumra* folk dance, which toured all over India and outside earned a name. An archaeological department was established in the state under Sri Kedarnath Mohapatra and Sri Satyanarayana Rajguru who took up

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various researches and excavation work of temples like Belkhandi Temple, and the site of Sapta Matrukas along the Tel Valley. As I happened to be the President of the Kalinga Historical Society, a quarterly high-class journal known as The Kalinga Historical Journal was published from Bhawanipatna. Sri Purna Chandra Rath of the Archaeological Department of the adjoining Patna state happened to be the Secretary and Senior Editor of the journal. Orissa did not have an Archaeological Department at that time. The nucleus of the Orissa Archaeological Department was started by Sri Satyanarayana Rajguru and Sri Kedarnath Mohapatra, employees of the erstwhile Kalahandi State and Sri Paramananda Acharya of Mayurbhanj State Service. This department is a gift to Orissa and has organised the Museum in Bhubaneswar.

To organise inland fishery, an officer was sent to do his postgraduation in Pisciculture. But, however, not much headway was made in this regard in the short span of eight years.

As the relationship between the ruler and his subjects was extremely cordial, the palace door was open twenty-four hours to hear anybody's grievances. There was no educated unemployment. *Bethi* system, the main cause of state people's agitation, was abolished long ago in 1919. There was no Prajamandal Movement or agitation of the people during my reign. Even though various efforts were made by the Congress leaders in Orissa to infiltrate the state and to instigate agitations through their official and non-official machineries, they had no effect. A report of Sri Ramachandra Patra, the then SDO, Thana Rampur is most revealing. He retired as a Senior IAS Officer in the Orissa Government. He clearly stated how the then SP of Koraput, Sri Laxman Mishra, called a meeting of the people of Kashipur in Rapkona village bordering Kashipur. Sri Patra's report is herewith reproduced. His confidential letter is

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quoted here.

Confidential Report Submitted to Mr S N Sharma,
MA BL, The District Magistrate
Kalahandi State

On 10 December 1947, a meeting was convened at Rapkana (Koraput) lying at a distance of five miles from our border, under the Presidentship of Thatraja of Kashipur, the disqualified zamindar. About two thousand people attended the meeting, the majority hailing from Kashipur town who are the henchman of Thatraja.

Raisahib Lakshmana Mishra, Deputy SP, Inspector Gagan Bihari Mohanty, CID Inspector, Mr Pradhan, one SI and a police constable were present. When the Deputy SP and others reached near the place of meeting, some of the Dombs of Kashipur who are the followers of Thatraja welcomed them shouting 'Jai Hind'.

Soon after, the Deputy SP reached there with his staff, the meeting began and the people passed some resolution there. Although some of the speakers were shirking to speak in the meeting in my presence, some of the police officers were (it is noted with regret) giving them hints as a sort of encouragement. CID Inspector, Mr Pradhan suggested that they pass a resolution pressing for an enquiry commission to enquire into the so-called oppression by the State Government.

The attitude of the police staff present there gave me an idea that they had full sympathy with the people present there, primarily to pass the resolution to start civil disobedience.

Sd/ Ramachandra Patra
Subdivisional Magistrate
Thana Rampur
11/12/47

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Later Sri Ramchandra Patra became IAS in the Orissa Government and was Collector of Ganjam and Cuttack. He also became the Home Secretary of Orissa Government.

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Chapter V

THE PARTITION OF INDIA AND THE MERGER OF INDIAN PRINCELY STATES

Part I

India was committed to war against Germany by a proclamation of the British Government. Prior to this, on 11 August 1939, the Working Committee of Indian National Congress passed a resolution not to impose the burden of war on India and voiced its condemnation on the dispatch of Indian troops to Singapore and Egypt. It also warned the Congress Ministry in the Provinces to prepare to resign, in case they were asked to carry out any imperialist policy. The Muslim League Ministry in Punjab and Bengal placed the manpower and the resources of their provinces at the service of the British Government. On the 4 September, the Viceroy appealed to Gandhiji, Jinnah and Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, Chancellor of Chamber of Princes to meet him. Gandhiji told the Viceroy that although he could not speak in the name of the Congress, his sympathies are with the British. Jinnah, as a diplomat, did not commit anything without reference to the Working Committee of the Muslim League. The Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes offered full co-operation. In the Congress Camp there were three opinions: Gandhiji for unconditional co-operation; Subhash Chandra Bose (the Congress President) was in favour of extracting maximum concessions from Britain's difficulties, the third was middle

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of the road policy where they wanted a clarification on Britain's declaration of war.

After a marathon session, the Working Committee, while condemning the German aggression, declared that India could not co-operate in the war. However, Gandhiji expressed his sorrow over his unconditional support. The Muslim League expressed that they could not give support without the fulfilment of two conditions. Firstly, the Muslims should be given fair treatment in the Congress Provinces, and secondly, any constitutional advancement should not be made without the consent and approval of the Muslim League. The Viceroy declared that while it was impossible to make any constitutional change in the midst of a war, he was prepared to associate with Indian political opinions by constituting a Defence Liaison Committee to be presided by the Viceroy. The Hindu Mahasabha, the Liberals, the Scheduled Castes and Parsis issued a joint statement challenging the Congress and the Muslim League to speak on behalf of the whole country. Sri Savarkar was in favour of supporting the war efforts on the condition that the dominion status should be given to India after the war. Sri Ambedkar expressed the view that the parliamentary system so far existing in India had failed and a new constitution be drafted.

On the 17 October, the Viceroy gave an undertaking on behalf of the British Government that at the end of the war, they would hold consultations with the representatives of various communities and interests and the Indian Princes. The Congress and the Congress Ministries in the Provinces resigned on 31 October 1939 and rejected this declaration. The governors assumed power to govern the provinces under the special provision of the 1935 Government of India Act. Sri Biswanath Das, the then Premier in Orissa, resigned four days later on 4 November 1939.

On 28 February 1940, in Patna, the Working Committee

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of the Congress declared that unless complete Independence was considered, it would resort to civil disobedience, and thus invited bitter hostility from British Government. In its Lahore meeting in March 1940, the Muslim League passed the resolution for the demand of 'Pakistan' and declared that India be divided into two sovereign states. This demand of Jinnah left a shiver in the spine of all Indians.

On 15 October 1940, Mahatma Gandhi explained his scheme of individual Satyagraha and selected Vinobha Bhave as the first Satyagrahi. He was arrested on 17 October 1940. In the months of October, November and December, prominent leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Govind Ballav Pant, Sarojini Naidu, Bula Bhai Desai and others were arrested under the Defense of India Rules. The Congress President Maulana Abul Kalam Azad became the Congress President at Ramgarh after the interim Congress President Dr Rajendra Prasad was arrested in January 1941. By December all the Satyagrahies were released.

In 1941, when Hitler attacked Soviet Union, its earlier ally to conquer Poland, the war situation underwent a dramatic change. The Communist Party of India, which had earlier branded the war as an imperialist design of the British Government, welcomed the Communist Party in their war efforts. On the 27 September 1942, the Congress Party in Orissa was reorganised with Harekrishna Mahatab as the General Director, in the Civil Disobedience Movement. Earlier in August 1939, Subhash Chandra Bose had visited Cuttack, his birthplace, and expedited the formation of a Forward Block consisting of progressive elements in the Congress.

In Orissa, inside the Congress, a Standing Committee of the Forward Block was formed with fourteen members and Sri Jadumani Mangaraj as its President. The President of

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the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee, Pandit Neelakantha Das gave full support.

In October 1940, along with the dissident group in the Congress, an association of the Orissa Assembly called the Orissa Congress Swaraj Dal was formed with Pandit Godavarish Mishra as its President and Diwakar Patnaik as its Secretary. They tried to form a coalition government in the province, which was to be supported by the Forward Block of Orissa. Eight Congress MLAs including Sarala Devi, supported the move. In the meantime, M N Roy held a meeting at Cuttack under the presidentship of Pandit Neelakantha Das, the then PCC President and advocated the necessity of India's participation in the war. According to him, the opportunity had to be utilised and militarised. He supported the movement of a Coalition Government. Pandit Neelakantha Das, PCC President, had resigned from the Congress Party in November 1940. But when he was asked by the Congress High Command to resign from the Central Assembly, he refused and was ultimately expelled from the Congress organisation in August 1941. The Coalition Government was formed under the name of the United Party under the Premiership of Maharaja K C Gajapati of Parlakhemundi, with Pandit Godavaris Mishra as Finance Minister and A S Khan as the other minister.

In January 1942, the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee formed a Committee to devise means of breaking the Ministry and winning back the Congress MLAs who had already joined the new party. Needless to say, the Coalition Government was formed on the defection of the MLAs from their original party. It was then that game of defection first started in Orissa. Whatever arguments were advanced then for the formation of a popular Coalition Government were not convincing.

However, some good work was done during this Ministry. Relationship with the Princely States was cordial.

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The Utkal University, a long outstanding demand, was established for which Pandit Godavaris Mishra would be ever remembered. Dr P Parija became its Vice Chancellor. The Orissa States fully co-operated in this move and Maharaja Pratap Chandra Bhanj Deo of Mayurbhanj became the Pro-Chancellor. In this period, the Satyagraha started by the Congress failed to inspire the people any longer. To keep up the ternpo, Congress workers in Orissa resorted to individual Satyagraha. On 22 June 1941, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kripalani addressed a public meeting at Cuttack.

Commenting on Jinnah's Pakistan proposal, Acharya Kripalani, the then Secretary of the Congress Party, stated, 'India could not be partitioned and then peace in the country would remain a mere dream unless India was indissolutely one.' Future events unfolded how true these words were. But alas, there was no consistency in precept and practice as future events proved.

During this period, Japan had already taken Singapore and Rangoon, and later the Andamans and Nicobar Islands. The Bay of Bengal was practically in Japanese hands. Japanese naval ships could be seen from the East Coast of India. A Japanese attack was considered imminent according to the popular belief then current in Orissa. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose had already organised the Indian National Army, raising troops from the prisoners of war belonging to the Indian Army and the Indian residents in Burma and strait settlements. A strong rumour spread in February 1942 that any moment Netaji would land on the Orissa Coast with his troops and liberate India from the British. But this never materialised.

In April 1942, there was utter confusion in the All India Congress Committee regarding the Congress programme in this regard. The British Cabinet Committee headed by Sir Stanford Cripps visited India and discussed dominion

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states with political leaders. They were prepared to concede this to the Indians after the termination of the War. The Congress rejected this offer. This action was resented by a large number of Indian leaders including some Congressmen. There was an apprehension of a serious split in the Congress. However, there was unanimity about accepting Mahatma Gandhi's policy that if a situation was created the people would readily submit to Congress administration. In case there was an upsurge in the country due to enemy invasions, it was the Congress who would see that no other political party usurped power in the event of the collapse of the British administration.

In February 1942, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek of China met Mahatma Gandhi in Calcutta. In March, Sir Stanford Cripps representing the British Government met Maulana Azad and Mahatma Gandhi in Delhi. He announced that the Indian people should get together to frame their own constitution. However, the Cripps negotiations broke down on the question of defence.

Sri C Rajagopalachari did not subscribe to the Congress view as he was all along an exponent for a national government in the Centre during the war period. Sri C Rajagopalachari explained his difference as a matter of opinion and not of action.

After returning to London Sir Stanford Cripps observed, 'We are not going to walk out of India right from the middle of the war, though we have no wish to remain there for any imperialistic reason.' By July, Congress was adamant on immediate Independence and the transfer of full power in the hands of Indians. On 8 August 1942, the All India Congress Committee passed the Quit India Resolution in Bombay by a large majority.

In July 1942, the All India Congress Committee in their Working Committee meeting at Wardha, instructed that Congress workers were to carry on vigorous propaganda to

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prepare the masses for this movement. In August 1942, the Quit India Resolution was endorsed by the All India Congress Committee in Bombay. This immediately led to the arrest of important Congress leaders. This ignited the fire of protest all over India. Demonstrations in the form of strikes, protest meeting and posters were everywhere. However, it did not have much effect in Orissa as in other states.

Subhash Chandra Bose was arrested in July 1940, and while in prison at Coonoor, resorted to hunger strike. He was released in December 1940 and kept under house arrest. A month later, on the 'historic Independence Day' on 26 January 1941, everyone one astounded as India heard the news that Subhash Babu had suddenly disappeared from his house on Elgin Road in Calcutta. When Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose made his escape from his house in Elgin Road, Calcutta, the Dhenkanal Dodge Car Dhenkanal No. 12 on the red plate with Dhenkanal flag flying took Netaji in the motorcade to catch the Punjab Mail at Burdhwan Station. He escaped in disguise. This fact was known to the British after some time and the Raja of Dhenkanal was considered by the Political Department as an enemy agent who should have been arrested. After narrating the Dhenkanal story I can only say that a ruler could not be absolved of responsibilities. Time was running out. It was too late. The last straw was already put on the camel's back and Dhenkanal administration was subjected to constant vilification and malignant by the press and the public. It was not until November 1941 that news leaked out from Berlin that Netaji had gone out of India to support from outside the struggle going on at home. In January 1942, he began his regular broadcast from Radio Berlin, which created tremendous enthusiasm in India.

In the midst of the war in early 1943, Subhash Chandra Bose left Germany after a perilous three-month voyage in a

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submarine to reach Singapore in July. His appearance was a signal for wild jubilation among the prisoners of the war and he formed the Azad Hind Fauj (Indian National Army). He became its Supreme Commander on 25 August and proclaimed the provisional government of Azad Hind on 21 October 1943.

In order to intensify the Quit India Movement, secret circulars were distributed to demolish government buildings, to disregard the orders of the existing government and establish a parallel government, to indulge in illegal acts such as non-payment of rent, cutting forests, manufacturing salt, etc. and socially boycott all persons opposed to the Congress movement and supporting the British Government. Though indiscriminate cases of arson were sporadically reported to police thanas and tahsil offices in the coastal districts, civil disobedience took an aggressive turn in Koraput district. The aborigines were easily incited to mob fury by cyclostyled underground leaflets which were circulated and spread like fire. At Jeypore, the police station was surrounded by *adivasis* and a lathi charge had to be resorted to. Similarly, in Semiliguda, Dasamantpur and Laxmipur, the *adivasis* destroyed wooden bridges and cut down large areas of reserved forests. On 21 August 1942, the Mathili Police Station was attacked and a forest official was killed. A number of policemen sustained injuries and the police had to resort to firing where five demonstrators were killed. A Congress worker, Laxman Naik who led the attack on Mathili Police Station, was arrested on a murder charge and was later on hanged. On 21 August 1942, there was a large gathering of *adivasis* in Papadahandi under the leadership of Sonu Majhi. The crowd was proceeding to Nowrangpur and they destroyed the police station. The police resorted to firing which resulted in five deaths and injuries to seventeen persons. We immediately got the news, because all this happened at the Ampani border. After

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the crowd dispersed, most of them migrated to Kalahandi district. Sonu Majhi stayed in Kaudola village and went back after India got Independence. He later joined the Ganatantra Parishad Party in 1950.

In the coastal area, a firing took place in Eram where thousands of people had gathered under the leadership of Sri Surendranath Dwivedi. They were proceeding to set fire to Basudevpur police station. There police killed one on the spot and another hundred people were injured. After this, the leaders of Congress Socialist Party were arrested under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and were detained in jail.

In the meantime, there was a misunderstanding between the Maharaja of Parlakhemundi, Pandit Godavaris Mishra and Neelakantha Das. The Coalition Ministry in Orissa fell in June 1944 and the Orissa Governor took charge of the administration of Orissa, vide Province u/s 93 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

Sarangadhar Das who later became Prajamandal leader and afterwards a Socialist leader was a resident of Dhenkanal State Prajamandal. He completed his higher studies by receiving stipends, etc. from Raja Sura Pratap Mahindra Bahadur who sent him for postgraduate studies to Japan to gather expertise in sugar technology. From Japan, he went to United States of America for further studies, and married one American Miss Hawswart and came back to India when Raja Sankar Pratap was the ruler. However, his married life was sad and the marriage ended in divorce. Madam Hawswart has narrated the details of her life in her book *Marriage to India*. As Mr Das wanted to start a sugar factory at Dhenkanal, Raja Saheb gave money from his own funds. He also collected a substantial amount by selling the *sal* trees from the forest covering 1000 acres of land in the Cuttack market. However, he squandered all the money he had taken on loan for the sugar factory and the

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project was a flop. A case was started for the recovery of the money in the adjoining Cuttack Court. He took the leadership of the Prajamandal, which was being organised by Hare Krishna Mahatab. Sri Mahatab could not have found a better man than this disgruntled one to take up the Prajamandal agitation in the Eastern States. Both Sri Mahatab and Sarangadhar Das became members of the State Enquiry Committee headed by Balwantrai Mehta, which produced a one-sided report based on fabricated evidence. The Prajamandal Movement (which was quiet during the war period) was mostly conducted by Sarangadhar Das from Cuttack.

The leadership of Sarangadhar Das was blown out of proportion by the local papers in Cuttack. In 1941, when Raja Shankar Pratap returned from Calcutta after the birth of the present Raja Kamakshya Prasad, he was received by more than 50,000 people at Dhenkanal. Though Sarangadhar Das got elected to the first Lok Sabha from Dhenkanal, he did not dare to stand for election in the second Lok Sabha from the same constituency. Now the Ganatantra Parishad was organised in the erstwhile state areas and Surendra Mohanty got elected to the Lok Sabha from the Dhenkanal constituency. Sarangadhar Das's last effort was to stand from Jagatsinghpur for the Lok Sabha. But he lost and there ended Sarangadhar Das's political life.

The much maligned Dhenkanal Raj family was vindicated when both Shankar Pratap and his wife Ratna Prabha got elected to Orissa Assembly in 1957 by huge margins. The Rani got elected thrice to the Orissa Assembly, even defeating Sri Biju Pattanaik, the Provincial Congress Committee President, with a huge majority. Raja Kamakshya Prasad Singh Deo was a sitting Member of the Parliament from 1967 to 1977 and 1980 onward and held various responsible posts in the Government of India and in the sports field. No doubt, the rulers were protected by the

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paramount power; however they always felt that the Damocles sword was hanging over their heads when the post-war world began to reshape.

In February 1943, Mahatma Gandhi undertook a fast. This had a tremendous impact throughout the nation. It had its impact on the Viceroy's Council from which its three members Sir H P Mody, Sri N R Sarkar and Sri M S Aney resigned. Other important leaders sent telegrams to British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to release Mahatma Gandhi. But the request was rejected, in spite of the pleading of some labour MPs and Professor Laskey. On 23 March, in a message to the Muslims of India, Mr Jinnah asked to observe the day as Pakistan Day, first declared on that day three years ago at Lahore. In May 1944, Mahatma Gandhi was released on medical grounds. On 15 May, Mahatma Gandhi expressed his desire to meet Mr Jinnah for a possible settlement and said 'My last year's request to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah stands still and I will be ready to discuss the question of Hindu-Muslim understanding as soon as I get better.' Mr Jinnah expressed his willingness. Now Mahatma Gandhi supported the C Rajagopalachari formula.

On 1 September, Giani Sher Singh, a prominent Akali leader said at Lahore, 'If Mr Gandhi and Mr Jinnah finally agree upon the division of the country into Hindu India and Muslim India, the Sikhs would demand the creation of an independent sovereign Sikh State.' However, the Gandhi-Jinnah talk ended in a fiasco.

1945 saw the victory of the Allied Forces, and World War II came to an end. Mahatma Gandhi welcomed the allied victory as the victory of truth over falsehood. By 15 June, all the Congress leaders had been released from jail. Congress president Maulana Azad got an invitation from Viceroy Lord Wavell to attend the Leaders' Conference at Simla on 25 June.

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The Quit India Movement, 1942, the emergence of the Azad Hind Fauj (a mutinous formation of the Indian Army), the revolt among the Naval ratings of the Royal Indian Navy, the food shortage, the failure of the administration to quell the large scale communal riots prevailing all over India, general relentlessness of the Indian people to have their Independence, made the British realise that their days were numbered. Churchill lost in the General Election in Britain. Mr Atlee formed the labour government as Prime Minister. On 19 February 1946, he announced that a Cabinet Mission consisting of Lord Pethaick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr Alvert V Alexander would proceed to India to discuss with various leaders about handing over the administration to Indians. The leader of the delegation was very outspoken and stated, 'We must quit India quickly or we shall be kicked out.' The Cabinet Mission met at Simla and interviewed various political leaders. The Congress was represented by its President, Maulana Azad and the Muslim League by Mr Jinnah. But after one week of deliberation, the talks broke down. The Cabinet Mission and Lord Wavell, the then Viceroy issued a statement saying, 'no agreement has been reached. Immediate arrangements should be made whereby Indians may decide the future constitution of India and an interim government should be constituted until a new constitution is brought into being.' Though they did not find any justification for a sovereign Pakistan to include Punjab, Bengal, Assam, Sindh and North West Frontier Provinces, they gave an indication that a smaller sovereign Pakistan, confined to the Muslim majority area, might be possible.

When further negotiations for an interim government failed with the Congress and the Muslim League, in June 1946 Lord Wavell announced that he would set up a temporary caretaker government of officials to carry on the

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administration in the interim period. In the middle of August 1946, Mr Jinnah gave a call to the Muslims to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan in order to assert their rights and vindicate their honour. This led to the worst type of communal violence all over the country. The situation in Calcutta was bad. In August 1946, for three days from dawn to dusk the people of Calcutta were uncontrollable and resorted to shooting. The dead people numbered at least 6000 and the maimed 20,000 or more. Those students of history who saw the holocaust of partition and how man killed man became completely callous. This figure is insignificant compared to three million people who died of starvation in the Bengal famine. The filthy and dreadful Calcutta slaughter not only murdered innocent people but also killed all hopes of a peaceful transfer of power. The stinking corpses of men, women and children were picked up by vultures. Every mouthful of human flesh that they picked tore the fabric of the unity of India. I was present in Calcutta when the killings started. The Patait of Talcher and his son, my cousin Keshari Gang Deb of Bamra were staying in the Talcher House in Park Circus in Calcutta, a predominantly Muslim locality. They had quite a number of Muslim personal servants. When the mob attacked their house with knives, iron rods, etc. and asked them to leave behind all they had, I remember how these three walked all the way to the Grand Hotel at Chowringee with the only clothes they had on. The riots spread to the interior of Bengal, Bihar and other parts of India.

On 26 April 1946, Maulana Azad writes in his book, 'I proposed Jawarharlal Nehru as the future Prime Minister.' (Maulana Azad admits his mistake as one of the Himalayan dimensions.) On 6 July 1946, the All India Congress Committee in Bombay elected Jawaharlal Nehru as its President. It endorsed the government proposal to summon a Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution for a free

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and independent India and decided to join the interim government. Maulana Azad never mentioned this in his book, though he was the main architect in all negotiations for India's Independence. On 24 August, the Viceroy announced the formation of the interim government with Jawaharlal Nehru as its head. Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru met the Viceroy to discuss the riot situation in Calcutta. On 2 September, the interim government took oath with six Hindus (including one from the lower class), three Muslims, one Sikh, one Parsi and one Christian representing Congress.

The British dubbed the Congress as a Hindu organisation and the Muslim League as a Muslim one in their game of divide and rule. Though the Indian National Congress had many nationalised Muslims like Moulana Azad, Asaf Ali, Humayun Kabir, Abdul Gaffar Kahan, etc. the British did not give credence to it as a secular organisation. On 2 September 1946, the Congress acquiesced in this British game and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to join hands with the Muslim League to have a coalition interim government under the Viceroy. As further events unfolded the Congress had eschewed all the principles it had stood for, the idea of a United India was given up and vivisection of the motherland was agreed to, for the sake of power.

I take my hat off to Mr Jinnah for having understood so well the disintegrating tendencies in Hinduism and inducting the viper Mr Jogindra Mandal (a briefless lawyer in Dacca) as a nominee of the Muslim League in the Central Cabinet. In spite of all our efforts to surrender, all that our forefathers and we had built for the sake of integration, this disintegrating virus played a prominent role in further vivisecting the unity of the nation.

Even Dr Ambedkar was reluctant to make any reservation for the schedule castes or tribes. He made

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temporary provisions lasting for ten years. But the same has been extended for fifty years. Now even neo-Buddhists, Christians and Muslims who don't accept the caste system in their religions are also being added to the list.

In my twenty-three year long career in the Lok Sabha, I tried my best to bring in a private member's bill to completely delete any provision of nomination in the constitution based on the category of SC or ST or Anglo-Indian. The bill I introduced never got priority and never saw the light of the day. However, with the use of the brute majority, the government went on extending these provisions. Today adult suffrage - without distinction of caste, classes or sex - is a myth, even though our constitution boasts of a casteless and classless society.

Similarly, as per my bill I wanted to do away with article 356 allowed to governors by the Home Ministry. It gives them power to make or break a government in spite of a popular verdict in the election. Such governors, belonging to the political party, ruling at the centre are answerable to the Home Minister of India but cannot be elected or impeached (unlike the Prime Minister or the Supreme Court Judge or the President of India). Governors are mostly those who are rejected at the polls but function as yes men of the Central Government and the blue-eyed boys of the Home Minister. My effort to get the constitutional amendment passed was not successful, though by sheer luck, my private members 'Lok Pal (Ombudsman's) Bill' for circulation of public opinion could be passed. Public opinion in the country and institutions from every nook and corner of the country supported the bill in 1967. Though all parties praise its utility, the last thirty-one years have passed without the bill in our statute book.

Lord Mountbatten of Burma, the former Supreme Commander of the Southeast Asia Command responsible for the allied victory over Japan, was called by Prime

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Minister Atlee to Number 10 Downing Street in London and asked to become the Viceroy of India and to hand over the administration to the Indians by June 1948. Mountbatten was hesitant to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. But he was persuaded by Atlee, as the fittest man to take up this job as he was a very senior officer of the Armed Forces and a diplomat having thoroughly studied the Indian conditions. Lady Edwina Mountbatten persuaded her husband to accept this great honour of becoming the Viceroy of India and to take up the challenge. Before coming to India, he met Churchill, the leader of the Opposition in the British House of Commons who was completely opposed to India's Independence.

When Mountbatten came to India, there was large-scale communal rioting, killing and arson in Punjab, Calcutta and Bombay, where life had come to a standstill. The government was completely paralysed. Men, women and children were indiscriminately slaughtered in the so-called holy war. Mountbattens were received at the Safdarjung Airport in Delhi by Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan of the interim government representing the Congress and the Muslim League respectively. Mountbatten selected Mr Canbel Gonas, a Britisher and Mr V P Menon as his Secretaries to help him in the process of handing over Independence to India. Mountbatten visited the riot torn areas in the country and Lady Mountbatten volunteered to join the Red Cross to give medical aid and other facilities to the injured. Mountbatten broke the news that the transfer of power must be completed by June 1948. He wanted the greatest goodwill and co-operation from all quarters and requested the ministers in the Interim Cabinet not to create any complications. At that time, Mahatma Gandhi was touring in the riot areas of Bihar and Maulana Azad was neither the Congress President nor a member of the interim government.

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The Muslim League did not agree to Mountbatten's proposal and wanted the question of Pakistan to be settled first. Mahatma Gandhi was all along consistent in his views on Pakistan and stated that 'partition will make a mockery of our lives.' In the 14 April 1940 issue of the 'Harijan' Gandhi wrote, 'partition means a patent untruth... My whole soul rebels against the idea... to assent to such a doctrine is for me, denial of God.' In the issue of 4 May 1940, he stated, 'the partition proposal has altered the face of Hindu-Muslim problem. It cannot come by honourable agreement.' On 24 May 1942, he said in the same paper, 'I consider vivisection of India is a sin.' When the question of partition came to a head, Mahatma Gandhi told Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel to avoid it by letting Jinnah form the government. Nehru's immediate reaction was, 'It is too big a price. We cannot agree.' However, Nehru assured that he would do whatever was practical. Gandhi stated that, 'if the British withdrew, there will be Civil War and Princely Indian States would create problem.' Nehru was angry and went away.

Through the good offices of his wife Edwina, Mountbatten made Nehru agree that the formation of Pakistan was the only solution. Later, Mr V P Menon informed Mountbatten that Sardar Patel had already made up his mind on partition but he did not like to speak to or disclose his feelings to Mahatma Gandhi. Mountbatten visited Punjab, and Peshawar in Northwest Frontier Province where the Congress Party had their government and met all the people and tribal leaders wanting Pakistan and on the way, saw the large-scale killing of Hindus. V P Menon who happened to be the Secretary for States, cautioned that after the lapse of the Paramountcy, the Indian States would become independent and create a problem. Nehru and Patel were very perturbed when Mountbatten stated that after the withdrawal of the British

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from India, the states would revert to being sovereign states and it was for them to decide their future course of action. Nehru and Patel were very upset. They thought that Mountbatten was going to create trouble by granting sovereignty to the 556 Indian States. But Mr V P Menon, a very practical man pointed out that this proposal would help the new government to negotiate better with the smaller states bereft of British protection. It would be worse if the successor government (Independent India) was made to carry the legacy of previous treaties and agreements made with the British. Nehru and Patel wanted the power to be transferred soon and Mountbatten to stay as the head of the Indian Dominion. By this time the Congress had already agreed to dominion status. At this crucial moment of Indian history, there were sharp differences among the leaders of the Congress.

Maulana Azad fought tooth and nail inside the Congress against the division of India. In the book, *India Attains Independence*, (recently published) on page 30, Azad has stated, 'the election of Jawaharlal Nehru as President of the Congress in 1946 was a Himalayan blunder.' He further wrote 'now a situation has arisen when we have become a greater supporter of partition than Jinnah.' I warned Jawaharlal Nehru that history could never forgive us if we agreed to partition. It would be that India was divided not by the Muslim League but by the Congress. My Lok Sabha colleagues, Sri Ansar Harwani, Sri Saifuddin Kichlu and Maulana Hazrat Mohini (these three Muslim MPs) opposed the idea in the ACCC meeting informing all of partition. The late Nawab Hamidulla Khan of Bhopal (earlier Chancellor of Chamber of Princes) and myself contacted almost all the leaders of all parties in Delhi to persuade them not to agree to the partitioning of the country. But we could not convert them to our view, as they were power hungry. Iron man Sardar Patel's obsession

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was the pursuit of power. Mountbatten immediately left for London with Mr V P Menon to meet Prime Minister Atlee and make sure that the Indian Independence bill in the British Parliament was passed. Atlee agreed, but feared that Churchill, against transfer of power and being the leader of the opposition, may delay the process. So Atlee asked Mountbatten to meet Churchill. Mountbatten could make Churchill agree after he reassured that India would remain a Dominion under the British Crown.

On the crucial negotiation table, consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Acharya Kripalani, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Abdul Rauf Nistar and Sardar Baldev Singh, all parties agreed to partition and the date was fixed as 15 August 1947. During negotiation, Jinnah raised the question of a corridor between the East and West Pakistan. However, he did not press this issue, being afraid of a deadlock and withdrew in favour of immediate transfer of power.

Please Refer 'Freedom at Midnight' by Carry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, and I quote the following conversation.

Q. What would the consequences have been had Gandhi said 'No'?

A. That would have been very serious indeed, because it would have put Congress on the spot. They would then have had to separate from Gandhi publicly. I think they might have done it, but I was determined this was not going to happen.

Don't forget, Krishna Menon and V P Menon were my men and they were my contacts, my links. And so I had got this feeling right the way through and I was able to nip it in the bud. And if I had not had these links, I should not have known in time. No. It would have been very difficult.

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And Gandhi was quite capable of doing it. That is the sort of puckish quality he had which made it so difficult. The only difference was that whereas former negotiators had thought the only person they had to placate, and get along with was Gandhi, I came to the conclusion that, really, they were all on my side against him. That was an interesting thing, which gave me a greater feeling of strength in dealing with him.

Q. When you were told by Krishna Menon that Gandhi was going to denounce your plan at his prayer meeting, did you decide to take urgent action?

A. Yes. I said he must come and see me before the prayer meeting. I knew that he would realise that I knew what he was up to. And he would not have let me down. That would have been a gross act of disloyalty and lack of friendship and he would not have done that, had he to come.

Q. How did you send for him?

A. To come back to Gandhi, I knew he was not happy after the day of silent discussions. Well, of course, he came in and he was rather a jovial creature like a little sort of bird, popping about, you know and he was obviously emotionally deeply upset - absolutely all crumpled up and huddled up. 'Oh! it is so awful' - lamenting and raising his hands and speaking in a low voice. What is he going to say in his prayer meeting?

And then I started off the idea of saying well, you can tell them that it is the Gandhi Plan. And he was very surprised and I said, 'Well, because you wanted the people to choose. The salient point you have got to make is that this plan gives them the right, through their elected representatives, to choose what they want.'

I said, 'you don't want to impose your will against that, do you?' So, bit by bit, we got the thing round. The main thing you see, was the voice of God, which I also had access to.

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A. Well, I knew he was not going to let me down. I was very much reassured by that thing and I told him, 'You know, I don't need to tell you because you know that I am as keen as you to try and keep the unification of India, and if by some miracle the Constituent Assemblies vote for this, we have got what you want. And if they don't agree, I am sure you would not wish us to oppose them with force of arms. He could be talked around.'

The next day, Mahatma Gandhi went to meet Mountbatten, a sad man. As he was observing silence on that day, he could not express his ideas freely. Feeling hurt, he left for Bengal and was touring in the riot affected areas to heal the wounds preaching love and compassion among the two communities.

It was then decided that a boundary commission would be appointed to draw the line of partition on the basis of the 1941 census and the states would be allowed to choose which Dominion they would like to join. General Auchinlek, the Commandant-in-Chief of the Indian Army objected to splitting the Indian Army, one of the ablest fighting machines in the world. But as all the assets were to be shared, including money in the banks, the movables of the Viceregal Lodge, the army also had to be split. Radcliffe finally announced the partition of India and Pakistan and the Independence has to take effect from the 15 August 1947. However, Sardar Patel wanted this to be done according to astrology, India should attain Independence on the midnight of 15 August. Jinnah immediately intervened, stating that Pakistan would become independent on the morning of 14 August.

On 25 July 1947 as the Independence Day was drawing nearer, Mountbatten called the Indian Rulers who were the members of Chamber of Princes to meet in Delhi. I went to Delhi to attend the meeting in the Chamber of Princes,

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with the Viceroy and Crown representative presiding. V P Menon, Secretary of the Minister of States for India and Ikramullah Khan for Pakistan, were present during the deliberations. Mountbatten pointed out that India and Pakistan were going to be formed as two Dominions and since Paramountcy was going to lapse, the Princely States would *de jure* become independent. But since, they are not viable units, he suggested they should join either of the two Dominions as per their geographical contiguity and before the Independence Day should sign an instrument of accession with the Dominion Government surrendering the three departments, i.e. Defence, External Affairs and Communications. For the continuance of day-to-day internal administration, a status quo and a standstill agreement could be signed. As the Nawab Saheb of Junagad was not present, his Dewan Sir Sahanawaz Bhutto (the father of late Z A Bhutto) objected to the British Government dictating to which Dominion the Indian States should accede to. Mountbatten did not reply. Later events showed that Junagad, along with two small Muslim States in Kathiaward, joined Pakistan. When Mountbatten stressed that the internal administration of the states would remain absolutely independent, I asked Mountbatten as to what was the guarantee that the Congress Government in India - who had been fanning Prajamandal Movement inside the state - would not send infiltrators to create trouble inside the states. Mountbatten gazed at the paperweight and said, 'he could see in the crystal ball that no such thing was going to take place.' He concluded his speech saying that the link with the British Crown was now to be broken. If nothing could be put in its place only chaos would result.

Was this not a complete betrayal of Indian States? Hardly twenty days were left for India's partition as well as Independence. By that time, most of the rulers of the states with geographical contiguity to India had made up their

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mind to join the Indian Union. Frantic efforts were made by Mr Jinnah to allure the Indian States adjoining Pakistan to join Pakistan and offered to concede whatever the Indian States demanded. Only Junagarh, Manavadar and Mungrol in Kathiawar acceded to Pakistan. This was done in spite of the opposition of the local people who later rose in revolt under the leadership of Sri Samaldas Gandhi. They declared a provisional government, and after a referendum of the people, the provisional government acceded to India.

It was decided by the Indian Cabinet to have Mountbatten as the Governor General of the Indian Dominion. Mr Jinnah was to become the Governor General of Pakistan. Just before partition, Mountbatten paid an official visit to Karachi (the prospective capital of Pakistan) along with Mr Jinnah and drove together in the streets of Karachi. They blessed the new dominion of Pakistan to be born. As per schedule, Pakistan achieved Independence on the morning of 14 August 1947. At midnight of 15 August, Independent India was born in the Constituent Assembly in the Central Hall of the Parliament. In his wonderful speech, Pandit Nehru announced, 'When the world is sleeping, India awakens through light and freedom.' The next morning the Indian Flag replaced the Union Jack in the Red Fort in Delhi and Jawaharlal Nehru became the new Prime Minister of the dominion 'India'. He addressed a massive rally from the ramparts of the Red Fort.

By this time only two states, i.e. Hyderabad and Kashmir, had not joined any of the two dominions, though Hyderabad had signed a standstill agreement with the Government of India. Some of the old rulers of the Indian States, who could not adjust to the changing scene, remarked that the instrument of accession would be an instrument of execution. But the young generation took the changed conditions in the spirit of challenge. I was twenty-

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seven years old and felt proud to become a citizen of Free India after a lapse of 1,000 years of foreign rule. I looked forward to carving a career in Free India, shaping the destiny of 400 million Indians and at the same time, felt proud to have surrendered at the feet of Mother India all that my forefathers had acquired and all that I possessed to build an integrated, prosperous and democratic India after partition.

India was truncated on the basis of religion. Mr Radcliffe drew the line. Two nations were born, i.e. India or Bharat and Pakistan - a geographical absurdity, with its two blocks at the Western and Eastern boundaries of India. The aftermath brought in its trail innumerable miseries, ghastly murders and fratricides and the largest displacement of human beings were noticed in history. This happened due to the lust for power, that is, to be on the seat of power anyhow and somehow to be there as long as possible. Let the posterity take its own course, as the scrambled egg cannot be unscrambled. The malady continues till today.

The 15 August 1947 was celebrated at Bhawanipatna with great enthusiasm and fanfare when I hoisted simultaneously the tricolour and the Kalahandi State Flag on the Secretariat building at Bhawanipatna. I presided over the huge gathering in front of the Secretariat building and the following resolution was unanimously passed after I spoke.

> Today is a very important day in the annals of the world, for India has attained her Independence and Great Britain has withdrawn from India making her free to decide, shape her future destiny and take her rightful place among the great nations of the world. It won't be out of place here to remind you of the past history of this great subcontinent, which all along contributed towards the upliftment and advancement of the various civilisations of the world. India had been independent till the British occupation. Though

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the Moghuls came from a foreign land and ruled this country, they were a part of India and Indians used to feel proud that they were their own rulers. But during the British occupation, the fate of India used to be decided from the White Hall about 7,000 miles away from her soil. We do not blame Great Britain for this. When the British came to India, this country was divided into so many small units, full of jealousy, intrigues and fighting among themselves. The protection of a great power like the Great Britain was essential. It was during the British Raj, that we have felt the importance of being indivisible as a great subcontinent. It is during this period that India tasted all the fruits of modern civilisation. But as I have pointed out, in spite of all these advancements in other spheres, the destiny of India used to be dictated by the British. This has brought about an awakening. In keeping with her ideals, Great Britain has arranged for India to be independent, to be free to decide and shape her destiny and to play an important role in the world. Indian States, along with their rulers, have played an important part in preserving the ancient culture of our motherland and have contributed much towards its advancement. They continue to do so. I shall be failing in my duty, gentlemen, if I don't remind you about the great sons and daughters of India who have done a great deal towards the attainment of India's Independence but who are no more to see and enjoy the celebration today. We hope that those great souls are able to see from heaven the functions of this memorable day and shower their choicest blessings on all of us. As a mark of homage to those great men, I propose that we should all stand and observe two minutes silence and remember their past deeds.

Though Kalahandi is a small state in India, our joys and rejoicing are not smaller in any way than those of others elsewhere in India. We feel proud that we are part of this ancient country. For our defence, foreign relations and communications, we will abide by the decisions of this dominion of India.

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At the same time, we give our blessings to the dominion of Pakistan and hope that, for all times to come, the cordiality, brotherhood, friendship and neighbourly feelings will be maintained between the two great dominions of India and Pakistan.

Part II

From 1877 to 1947, one-third of the Indian Empire and a quarter of its population were not under British rule. The Indian States were ruled by 563 Indian Princes. The State of the Nizam of Hyderabad exceeded in area, revenue and population of the many sovereign states who are today the members of UNO. The smallest one was the Talukdar of Katodia whose population was 1401 and who took to government service in adjoining British India to augment his finances. Among the privy purse holders, after the merger of the Princely States in India, after Independence, the Talukdar of Katodia was getting an annual privy purse of Rs140.

Of the 563 Indian Princely States, those which were geographically contiguous acceded to Pakistan and others to India, except some exceptions like Jammu and Kashmir, Hyderabad, Travancore, Junagarh, Manavadar and Mungrol. The last three states in Kathiward acceded to Pakistan (even though there was no geographical contiguity), because the Nawabs were Muslims and thought that their interests could be better safeguarded by Pakistan. Of the three, Junagad was the biggest state. There was popular upsurge in the state against the arbitrary decision of the Nawab. Of course, this was with the moral support of the Government of India. The leader of the movement was Samal Das Gandhi and the agitators formed their own parallel government. They were about to usurp the government buildings and to surround the Nawab's palace, when the Nawab got into his plane and flew to Karachi, the

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then capital of Pakistan, taking with him all his jewellery and his favourite dogs. In the process of this escape, he forgot to take his begums with him. Later, a parallel government under the leadership of Samal Das Gandhi was recognised by the Government of India along with Manavadar and Mungrol.

Travancore State had a long seacoast and produced tea, coffee, rubber, coconut and spices which were foreign exchange earners. Under the advice of his dewan, Sir C P Ramaswamy Iyer, the Maharaja decided to join the United Nations as a separate independent state. When news of this move leaked out, there was violent opposition from the people and there was an attempt on the life of the dewan. Understanding the mood of the people, the Maharaja acceded his own state to the dominion of India.

In the meantime, Mr Jinnah tried his best to get the adjoining Jodhpur, Jaisalmir and Tripura States to join Pakistan under whatever conditions they preferred. But the patriotic feeling of these rulers overcame all temptations of Mr Jinnah and they joined India.

According to the Radcliffe Award, Indian Subcontinent was divided into two dominions, i.e. India and Pakistan. However, there was no contiguity between West and East Pakistan. It was a geographical absurdity with a gap of more than 1,000 miles between them. Future events proved that these two units could not hold together and in 1972 East Pakistan became Bangladesh with the residue remaining as Pakistan. On the 15th of August, 1947, when India celebrated its Independence, the Union Jack was lowered and the tricolour was unfurled on the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi. Mahatma Gandhi was not present in Delhi. He was trying to heal communal wounds in district Noakhali in Bangladesh along with Mr H Sarhawadi. That day, Gandhiji did not eat and observed it as a day of mourning remarking that India is provided with great

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values which needed to be followed in our land. However, in Delhi, there was great celebration when the National Flag was unfurled by Nehru before a vast gathering. After saluting the Indian Flag, the Governor General Mountbatten along with Edwina Mountbatten and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru drove in a procession alongside the massive, cheering crowds. There was celebration throughout the country.

General Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army divided the army on the basis of religion. As a result of partition, five million sikhs remained in Pakistan and the other five million in India. Those in Pakistan wanted to come back to India, which they considered to be their motherland. They joined the mass migration of Hindus that took place from Pakistan to India on the Western border. Similarly, there was large-scale migration of all the Muslims from India to Pakistan. I happened to be present in Delhi at that time. The first migration to be organised was to be in two trains between Lahore and Delhi. The first train of Hindus, which came to Delhi station, not a single person was alive, all bodies were mutilated. Some were headless, some armless. It was further learnt that there was large-scale arson, killing and looting taking place in Lahore. In Delhi also, the Muslim community was brutally killed. Their property was looted in the old Delhi area. The eminent Lawyer, Sir Zafrullah Khan who was the Viceroy's Executive Councillor before the interim government, faced the brunt of attack. His famous library, which contained rare collection of books and his beautiful house, were burnt to ashes. All movables were looted. However, in time, he along with the members of his family came to the Governor General's house and took shelter.

I had seen dead bodies in Calcutta on the pavements due to starvation during the Bengal famine of 1942. However,

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in Delhi, the sight was more gruesome. I found many dead bodies lying, with injury marks. Some were half burnt and even the children were not spared. My taxi driver, a Sardarjee, brought me to my hotel from the main Delhi Station, boasted that earlier that evening he had killed (with his kripan) three Muslim passengers. He proudly showed my Secretary Sri Kashi Prasad Babu and me his blood stained kripan. It was difficult to move about in a car. I could go out only in one of my friends' cars or communicate by telephone from my hotel room.

A similar state prevailed in Lahore, Rawalpindi and Multan where the Hindus were treated likewise. Even life long friends of different communities did not hesitate to kill friends and neighbours in their religious frenzy. However, there are many exceptions where Hindus gave shelters to the Muslim families in India at great personal risk. In Pakistan also, many Muslim families gave protection to their Hindu friends. As it became impossible for a Hindu or a Sikh to stay in Pakistan and a Muslim to stay in India, there was mass migration from both the sides. The safest was to cross the border on foot, even though the refugees were raided and killed by the members of the majority religious groups. Man became an animal in those days. It was decided by both the governments that the army would give protection to the miles long refugee trail up to the border. The armies of both India and Pakistan did splendid work in giving this protection, under the supervision of two Prime Ministers, Jawaharlal Nehru and Liaquat Ali Khan. But on the way many people died due to exhaustion and cholera. When leaving their hearth and home, refugees could take only those movables which they could carry in bundles on their head or in bullock carts or travel carts. These refugee columns crossed the border at several places along the border, even in desert areas where there were no roads at all. Their hardship cannot be described. When the

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first batch of refugees reached Delhi, it created a problem as to where to house them. Many refugee camps were set up round about Delhi where they lived for decades or more, till they were properly rehabilitated.

Empty buildings such as the Purana Quila, Humayun's Tomb, the railway platform and thousands of tents pitched round about Delhi, became refugee camps. Many noble and respectable families, who came on foot along with the refugees, had to share the same fate. I know of a noble family of Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir State who lost everything and had to stay in those tents.

Poonch was the most important feudatory of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. The pedigree of the Poonch Family can be seen on the next page. They enjoyed privileges in the matters of gun salute, customs, law, police, courts, revenue and all matters of civil and criminal administration.

On the basis of the original Sanads, the area of Poonch was granted to and held by Raja Dhyan Singh, who was the founder of the Poonch Raj. While Maharaja Gulab Singh was the ruler of Jammu, he later bought Kashmir from the British. Raja Dhyan Singh, his younger brother was proclaimed Raja of Poonch. He was the Prime Minister in the Court of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab. There were insurgencies and infighting between the tribals of the area. In order to set up the proper administrative machinery, Raja Moti Singh divided the area into five tehsils, i.e. Haveli, Mendher, Bagh, Saduti and Thakiala Prava. He established *Thanas* and *Chowkees* for proper police set up. He raised the armed forces from 3000 to 12000. Raja Moti Singh was a secular Raja and he appointed Mian Nizamuddin as his Prime Minister. Mirza Haider Beg was in charge of Jail and Shahid Mehar Shah as adviser. He provided funds for construction of mosques. He also allotted *jagirs* to the prominent Muslim shrines like Sayadat-e-Qadir, etc. He respected and honoured the tribals who were earlier suppressed.

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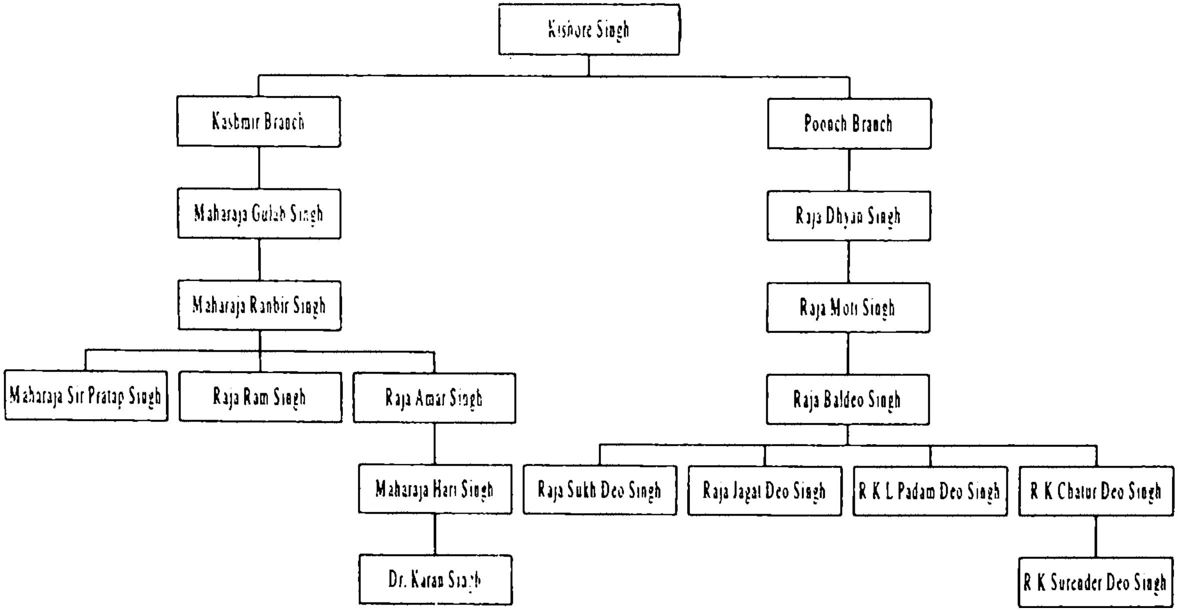
PEDIGREE TABLE FOR KASHMIR AND POONCH FAMILY



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As a result of his secular attitude, the Muslims accepted him as Raja from the core of their heart. There were no disturbances or religious conflicts. People of all communities, whether Hindu or Muslim or Sikh, lived peacefully with each other. Raja Baldev Singh also carried the tradition of secularity. The Poonch area continued to be a haven of communal harmony. He passed away in 1916 and was succeeded by Raja Jagat Deo Singh who was the last Raja of Poonch State. His second son was Raj Kumar Chatur Deo Singh.

One of them was my brother's son-in-law, a refugee who is a Director in Government of India now. It is really great that those people who have seen the greatest hardship in life, started their new career from zero.

This state of affairs was confined not only to the Western border. We could see similar tragedy all over on our side as well as in the Eastern Sector. Gandhiji worked in Nuakhali in East Pakistan along with Sarhawady. Gandhiji rushed back to Calcutta when he heard of communal violence, and stayed in Sarhawady's house. Both Mahatma Gandhi and Sarhawady were stoned by the angry mob that wanted to burn the house. Gandhiji took resort to his last weapon: 'the fast unto death.' His deteriorating health had a great impact and changed the heart of the angry crowd. Both Hindus and Muslims surrendered their arms before Gandhiji.

At that time, the social service done by Edwina Mountbatten and Raj Kumari Amrit Kaur, the Health Minister, cannot but be appreciated. They worked day and night to heal the wounds and ameliorate the condition of those destitutes with their love and sympathy.

It was a well-known fact that in those days Pandit Nehru became more intimate with Mountbatten, particularly with Edwina. I do not want to deal with their private lives, but Pandit Nehru had free access to their private swimming pools, study room and even bedroom. When Pandit Nehru

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fell ill due to exhaustion, it was Edwina who was all along at his bedside and nursed him back to health. Till then, Pandit Nehru did not realise that the country had to bleed to pay the cost of partition. It brought in its trail misery and suffering to millions of people who became homeless overnight. After her return from Pakistan, Edwina was consoled by Pandit Nehru who said he was helpless and could not do anything more. He said that they would have to reconcile themselves to all this as the price for freedom. Mountbatten visited Karachi and was the guest of Mr Jinnah. He wanted the latter's co-operation to tackle the refugee problem. By then, Jinnah was gravely ill. He had tuberculosis, which was not curable then. It was kept a guarded secret. He died thirteen months later. Had it been known earlier, probably the pages of history would have been different.

As the army was divided, it was decided that there would be a joint defence council to look after the transfer of population from both the sides. Mountbatten gave his consent, subject to the approval of the Indian Cabinet of which Pandit Nehru was the Prime Minister. Then, Mountbattens retreated to Simla for a holiday. However, their visit was very short. Mr V P Menon (the Secretary for States and very close to Mountbatten) phoned that at Delhi the killings were going on a large scale. Even though Pandit Nehru had tried to stop these at great personal risk, it could not be stopped. The authorities had already lost control of law and order in Delhi. Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel also needed the presence of the Governor General in Delhi and requested him to come back immediately. Mahatma Gandhi, who was in Bengal and trying, in his own way to bring back normalcy in communally torn Bengal, was brought back to Delhi. He stayed in Birla House and besides meeting visitors (mostly the victims of the mad frenzy), used to address his prayer meeting in the afternoon

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at 4.30 p.m. I had the privilege of attending one of those meetings. There were millions of refugees spread on both sides of the border. In Delhi alone, there were more than one million refugees. The communal riots were going on even in the adjoining villages of Delhi. Orissa's first ICS officer, Sri Krupasindhu Mishra, a friend of mine was the Commissioner for Delhi at that time. After attending a banquet in the Governor General's house, he was shot at in Mehrauli and died on the spot. Next morning we went to his house to console his wife Leela Mishra (who later joined the films) and his relations.

During the period from the 15 August 1947 to 15 December 1947, Government of India's relationship with Indian States moved so fast that it was difficult to keep track of events. After being completely demoralised by the partition of the country, the Government of India, along with many patriotic thinkers, thought about how to build a more integrated and a more prosperous and economically viable India. The 500 odd Indian States were of three categories. The Class-I States were salutary states exercising full internal sovereignty with the powers of High Court. The rulers could confirm death sentences or commit the guilty to life imprisonment, or exercise clemency on mercy petitions. The Class-II States exercised only the power of the district and Sessions Judge. The Class-III States enjoyed the powers of first class magistrate. They had to depend on India for the supply of the essential goods, arms and ammunitions, transport including railway, post and telegraph facilities. So, many rulers organised various unions, surrendering some of their powers so that they could be viable units to fit into the Indian Union under the new Constitution that was being drafted in the Constituent Assembly. After the accession, the states were represented in the Constituent Assembly, half by people's representatives and half by ruler's nominees. From the

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Orissa States, Sri Sarangdhar Das of Dhenkanal and Sri Yudhistir Mishra of Bolangir represented the people; Lala Raj Kanwar, the Chief Minister of Patna, represented the ruler's interest in the concerned Assembly. The Eastern States Union was formed by the merger of twenty-three Orissa States and sixteen states from Central Provinces. For the time being, they selected Raigarh as the capital of the Eastern States Union.

Among the rulers, Raja Sri Ramanuj Saran Singh Deo of Korea was elected President. I was elected as the Vice President. There was an executive committee of the Council of Rulers, which used to meet quite often to decide policy matters. As the rulers of these thirty-nine states surrendered some of their sovereign powers to the Union, an Eastern States High Court was established consisting of three judges. Justice Mohammed Ismail, the retired Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court, became the Chief Justice. On the executive side, Sri N Madhava Rao, the retired Dewan of Mysore State was appointed as the Prime Minister and P H Krishna Rao, a Senior Civil Servant of Mysore, became the Chief Secretary of the Secretariat. It was decided in one of the meetings of the Ruler's Council that on the legislative side, the people's representative from various states would be elected from their respective Legislative Assemblies by indirect vote. They would form the legislature along with one-third nominees of the rulers. But this process could not materialise within these five months. However, in certain states there was a Legislative Assembly of the elected representatives by the people. In Kalahandi, the Legislative Assembly was inaugurated on the 12 August 1946 by the author. After the inaugural function, the members of the Legislative Assembly presented an address to the author which is reported as follows:

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To
H H Maharaja Sree Sree Pratap Keshari Deo
Ruler, Kalahandi State

May it please your Highness,

Today is a great and memorable day for us as your Highness inaugurates the Kalahandi State Legislative Assembly as a step towards a responsible government. It is a source of immense pleasure to all your humble subjects to accept your munificent gift with great satisfaction and pride.

Your Highness' love for your subjects and your careful thoughts and sympathetic consideration for the betterment of the economic, political and cultural aspects of your people have put them under a deep debt of gratitude to you. Your Highness' manifold nation building works have endeared us with their broadmindedness, sense of justice seasoned with mercy. Your championing of the national cause is unparalleled; your cordial parental affection for your subjects and opening your door for them at all times have emboldened them to approach you to redress their grievances.

Your Highness comes from the same illustrious family renowned for the reign of Raja Bahadur Udit Pratap Deo and your revered father Maharaja Braja Mohan Deo, the father of the modern Kalahandi. You being the illustrious son of the illustrious father have kept the tradition of your family in taking care of your subjects like your own children. The subjects of Kalahandi on their part also have all along been loyal to their ruler and have passed through many storms and stress in following their maharaja, their national leader for the cause of their land. We assure you, Your Highness that we shall ever follow the footprints of our forefathers and shall be alert to your beck and call and follow you wherever you lead us for the cause of our mother Kalahandi.

The progressive nature of your administration has been showering many blessings on us. The Praja Sabha, Village

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Panchayat Order, the rural development scheme and other healthy measures inaugurated by Your Highness for the progressive administration of this land during the reign of Your Highness were the harbingers of giving us more responsibility in administration. The Legislative Assembly which is inaugurated today by Your Highness prophesies better days ahead for us.

We have listened with rapt attention to Your Highness' learned, valuable and practical advice and we pray to God to grant us strength of mind to follow every letter of it.

We pray to the Almighty that he might grant long life and sound health to Your Highness and let the cord of Raja and Praja among us be tightened. May Your Highness' reign open a glorious chapter in the history of this land and let Your Highness' golden deeds be inscribed everywhere with letters of gold.

We beg to remain
Your Highness
Your Highness' most loyal subjects
The Members of the Kalahandi
State Legislative Assembly
Bhawanipatna

12 August 1946
Bipin Bihari Parhi, Gajendra Ramaswami Chaudhuri, Uchhabananda Pradhan, Ganadhip Bhoi, Jagjeevan Lal Sharma, Dwarikanath Sumant Patra, Seth Ramgopal, Kedarnath Mohapatra, Suresh Chandra Behera, Lakshan Prasad Behera, Hari Shankar Panda, Ram Prasad Patjoshi, Gadan Mahakud, Karambir Raisingh Babu, Durga Charan Pattanaik, Kishore Chandra Deo, Goura Chandra Singh, Lal Bholanath Shah Deo, Kali Prasad Babu, Rai Saheb Dhaneswar Patra, Indramani Kar, Braja Moni Singh, Surendranath Sharma, Markanda Ratha, Rai Saheb Netrananda Kanungo, Anukul Chandra Sengupta

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The next day I sent a message that one of the MLAs may be chosen from among the elected members of the Assembly to be taken in my Council. Sri Gajendra Ramaswami Chaudhuri and Sri Uchhabananda Pradhan contested and the latter was elected by a majority of votes. He was taken in among the Council of Ministers and was given portfolios like Civil Supply, Public Health and Education and was to be responsible to the Legislative Assembly. The process of peoples' participation in Kalahandi State Administration had just started. The idea was to have a second Council of Ministers (also to be taken after a trial of six months), with the ultimate object of having a responsible popular administration in the state. As I have mentioned earlier, the instrument of accession of Kalahandi State to India was signed by me. The standstill agreement for the continuance of the status quo relation with the British to be continued with the new Indian Dominion was signed by Sri Uchhabanand Pradhan, the popular member of the Council of Ministers. The administration continued smoothly and as all differences used to be sorted out in the cabinet meeting, presided over by me, after mutual discussion. In the Legislative Assembly, the Dewan was the Presiding Officer who acted as the Speaker to report the proceedings of the Assembly to the Cabinet. As the Orissa Provinces were under the Chief Ministership of Sri Harekrushna Mahatab, the peoples' agitation against the state's administration was intensified. It hardly had any impact in Kalahandi State and at that time a unanimous resolution was passed in the Assembly that under no circumstance should Kalahandi State merge in the Orissa Province. When this resolution was passed, Sri Sarveswar Das, an advocate from Cuttack residing at Bhawanipatna, shouted from the visitor's gallery. He was immediately taken away from the gallery by the security staff.

The Eastern States Union Secretariat looked after the

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negotiations with the State's Ministry of the Government of India. It looked for recognition of the Eastern States Union as a unit to be fitted in the proposed federation of India, the constitution of which was being drafted in the Constituent Assembly. Its other important work was to arrange for the supply of essential commodities like salt, sugar, kerosene, petrol, and arms and ammunition for the State's Police force. Opium, ganja and other goods were brought from the former British India, now Indian Dominion. Another function was to maintain the Eastern States Reserve Police Force and deploy them to assist the state administrations in law and order. The Board of Forestry and Agriculture was formed and the then Forest Advisor, Dr H F Mooney was posted at Sambalpur. Another Director of Agriculture, with his staff, was stationed at Bolangir along with an Agricultural Training School. Dr Mayadhar Mansingh, the Educational Convenor, along with his staff, was taken over by the Eastern States Union. The payment of the High Court and its staff was made by the Eastern States Union Secretariat at Raigarh. To meet all these expenses, the states joining the Union shared the expenditure budget on the basis of their annual revenue.

The Eastern States Union had 60,000 sq. miles and a population of more than eight millions, i.e. the same as that of Australia with its rich forest and mineral wealth. At that time, forest income was the major source of income of these states. The coal mines in Talcher and in Chirimiri in Korea, and the rich Manganese and Iron Ore mines of Keonjhar and Bonai were considered the best deposits in the country. Patna State also had some graphite. For working the bauxite mines in Kashipur, Karlapat, Thana Rampur and Jaipatna hilltops, a private limited company 'The Kalahandi Bauxite Limited', in collaboration with a big industrialist with the Kalahandi State having fifty-one per cent share, was commissioned. Mr Baxter, the retired Chief

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Engineer of Bombay Presidency along with the State Irrigation Engineer Sri Bhubaneswar Behera, submitted the preliminary report of the Upper Indravati Project, estimated at that time to be 100 crores. Mr Ramakrishna Dalmia showed some interest in putting up an Aluminium Plant with Canadian collaboration. The Kalahandi State agreed to the Canada-Dalmia collaboration provided they took up the Upper Indravati Project for their power supply. If they did, the latter would ultimately irrigate the lands of the Dharamgarh Subdivision in Kalahandi State.

The Canadian Company insisted on taking a long lease of one of the bauxite mines in the state, to which the Kalahandi administration had agreed.

But as the Indravati River is an inter-provincial river and the import of foreign machineries and turbines from foreign country, the Government of India's approval was necessary. So, the Eastern States Union Secretariat negotiated with the Government of India to get the clearance.

Only Mayurbhanj State did not join the Eastern States Union as its Maharaja considered his state to be a viable unit to join the Indian Federation alone. At that time, Mayurbhanj State also had a Legislative Assembly. As I have mentioned earlier, all effort by the Utkal Provincial Congress Committee and more particularly Sri Hare Krishna Mahatab, the Prime Minister of Orissa, to infiltrate into Kalahandi State and to instigate the local people for agitation against durbar administration was a complete failure. But in the adjoining Patna State, the Prajamandal agitation, under the leadership of Sri Kapileswar Prashad Nanda and Sri Judhisthir Mishra, took firm roots. This was because there was an acute problem of educated unemployment. In recruitment and posting, outsiders were given preference to local candidates. Though the agitation in Patna was peaceful, the various meetings of the Krushak

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Dal and their critical participation in the Local Assembly against the Patna State administration demoralised the local people and the Maharaja to a large extent.

In 1947, Raja R P Singh Deo of Korea, the President of the Eastern States Union, wanted to meet Mahatma Gandhi with a delegation of some rulers. I happened to be at Delhi and was closely watching the various developments taking place there so far as the Indian States were concerned. In the month of January, Raja Saheb of Korea, Maharaja of Patna, Raja Saheb of Dasapalla and I met Mahatma Gandhi at 3 o'clock in the afternoon in Birla House. He was very kind to give us an interview for nearly twenty minutes with his Secretary Sri Pyarelal taking notes. We appraised him of the political situation in the Eastern States and the constant instigation of the people by the Congress people of coastal Orissa. We also told him of similar attempts in Chhatisgarh by the Central Provincial Congress leaders.

After giving us a patient hearing, Mahatma Gandhi replied that whatever was possible he would do to help us as he considered all Indian States as part and parcel of the Indian people. Their rulers had shown their loyalty to the motherland by acceding to the Indian Union. At the same time, he expressed his helplessness. According to him, Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister of India, hardly met him. And, Sardar Patel's occasional visit to him was only to enquire about his health. After the meeting was over, he asked us to attend his prayer meeting. We followed him to his prayer meeting, which was conducted in the Spacious Garden of the Birla House where about 2,000 people had gathered. After the usual *Ramdhun* in which he also participated, many people from the crowd (mostly refugees from Pakistan located in Purana Quila) got up and started narrating the pitiable and insanitary conditions they were staying in. Suddenly, a crowd of about ten to fifteen people (all Muslims from Old Delhi) came crying and fell prostrate

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at Gandhiji's feet. They told him how that very morning, some members of their family had been killed in the presence of the local police. Mahatma Gandhi was greatly moved and even wept. He appealed to both the communities to maintain peace and treat each other as brothers because ultimately they had to remain together. He further stated that history and geography together have made the Indian Subcontinent. Was he not party to partition on the basis of religion?

We noted that though there were some security arrangements, all persons had access to the prayer meeting of Mahatma Gandhi. We dispersed after the prayer meeting. While saying goodbye Mahatma Gandhi told Pyarelal that in case of any difficulty, we were most welcome to meet him again any time.

In the Provisional Parliament, where the States' representatives also participated, 'the extra provincial powers bill' was on the anvil. Its aim was to provide extra provincial jurisdictional powers to the Central Government in certain areas outside provinces. After a short discussion, it was referred to a Select Committee. It came up for discussion on 9 December 1947. The Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel, said that the bill gave the Central Government powers to interfere in those areas of semi-jurisdictional or non-jurisdictional states where there was a danger of anarchy prevailing. He further stated that those states were mainly to be found in 'Western India, Kathiawar, Manipur, etc.' He further stated that, 'On 15 August, there were certain areas in the Eastern States Agency where the Government of India had no jurisdiction at all. Apart from the execution of the instrument of accession, there had been cases where in the interest of the states themselves and for their own protection, the states had approached the Government of India to exercise jurisdiction over them.'

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Prior to the passing of this Act, an extra provincial powers ordinance was promulgated when the Central Assembly was not in session. In early December, in order to bring law and order situation under control in the Nilgiri state (where the agitation against the establishment was led by Sri Kailash Chandra Mohanty and Sri Banamali Das), the Orissa Prime Minister, Sri Hare Krishna Mahatab, deputed Sri Durga Charan Das, the then Collector of Balasore along with the Superintendent of Police and a police force to Nilgiri. The latter is at a distance of twelve miles from Balasore. The team forced the Raja of Nilgiri at the point of revolver to sign a paper in which the administration of Nilgiri was taken over by the Balasore district Collector on the ground that the Nilgiri agitation was creating a law and order problem in Balasore district.

When this extra provincial jurisdiction Act was passed on 9 December, Sardar Patel stated, 'a recent case in point was that of Nilgiri in Orissa, where there had been complete anarchy and danger to the ruler's life. The ruler and the representative of the people of the states have sent telegrams asking the dominion government to intervene because of violence and misrule.' While participating in the debates, Sri N Madhav Rao said, 'that though the bill on the face of it looked simple but in the light of Sardar Patel's observations, he was inclined to think that there was significant change of policy in relation to certain states.' The instrument of accession was already there and he wanted to know why the Central Government should seek a supplementary source of authority, which was no longer existent. He maintained that the relation between the dominion and the states was contractual and not feudal.

Sir Madhav Rao wanted the bill to be circulated for public opinion. Law Minister Dr Ambedkar replied that 'there was no clandestine effort in the bill to usurp any authority from any state, which had not voluntarily

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surrendered such authority to the dominion government. He pointed out that the instrument of accession of the 'A' class states differed from those of semi-jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional states. In the case of the latter, there was nothing in the Indian Independence Act to exercise such power even after the lapse of Paramountcy.' While replying to the debate Sardar Patel stated 'there was no reason to assume that because Paramountcy has disappeared, there will be no power of the Government of India as the Government of India is proposed to function as a government and would not allow any vacuum or anarchy to develop in any part of the country. It has empowered the Government of India to enter a state in case of a conflict between the people and state administration.'

This bill was necessary for a legislative stamp as one such executive action of the dominion government. On the same day, I met the Raja of Nilgiri standing near Hotel Wenger on the Queens Road (now Janpath) and asked him about the incident at Nilgiri. He was completely demoralised and told me that the Balasore Collector arrived with a police force along with the SP. Without even drinking a cup of tea, he asked him to sign on some paper. A large procession of Prajamandal workers was standing in front of his gate. When he was asked to sign, he did so and handed it to the Collector without keeping a copy of it for himself. By that time, the writing on the wall was very clear. I could read that the future of the 'A' Class and 'B' Class States was finished. I was wondering how the Eastern States Union, which comprised mainly of 'A', 'B' and 'C' Class States could function if it would be dismembered of those units. Political events were moving so fast that I immediately returned to Bhawanipatna and proceeded to Cuttack where the Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel wanted to meet the Orissa States' Rulers (including those of Kalahandi and Patna) which were under the Political Agent at Raipur and

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the Ruler of Mayurbhanj which was tagged to the Bengal Group. I stayed in Sri Naba Krishna Choudhuri's house, which was taken on rent by us as my brother was staying for his college education at Ravenshaw College. The Raja of Bamra, my brother-in-law also stayed there. My father-in-law, the Raja of Puri, also happened to be there for some time. We further learnt that most of the Prajamandal leaders were also present at Cuttack. Close security was being maintained by the Orissa Police. Some of the Prajamandal leaders like Dr Natabar Pandey, President, Gangapur State Prajamandal and its Secretary, Sri Sundarmani Patel, Sri Rajaballav Mishra, President, Keonjhar State Prajamandal and Sri Upendra Jena, Secretary, Keonjhar Prajamandal tried their best to meet their respective rulers, but they could not. They further tried to meet the Orissa State's Prajamandal President Sri Sarangadhar Das, but he was hiding somewhere. They tried their best to have a meeting with Sri Kapileswar Prasad Nanda of Patna State and Sri Pabitra Mohan Pradhan of Talcher State in the Dharamsala at Banka Bazar in Cuttack on 14 December. But they did not turn up in the meeting.

On the morning of 14 December, Sardar Patel met the 'B' and 'C' class States' Rulers. What transpired we did not know. The 'A' class Rulers met Sardar Patel at 4 p.m. in the Government House. Sardar Patel told them that those states were not viable enough to provide a modern administration. They would have to be tagged to form a larger unit for their own best interests and for the interests of the Orissa Province. The latter was financially deficit, scattered and could not provide a High Court or a Public Service Commission and the required social justice under a democratic administration. It had no capital city of its own and was holding its Assembly Sessions in the halls of Ravenshaw College. In other words, Orissa would also benefit. If the 'A' class rulers joined hands in the Orissa

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Province, then it would become an ideal one because of its vast resources. He further suggested that there would be no problem for the 'B' and 'C' class states, which according to him, did not enjoy full sovereign powers. So, he appealed to the 'A' class rulers that 'they should merge their states in the dominion of India and the Government of India will hand over their administration to the Orissa Province. A generous, tax free, privy purse would be provided to the rulers in perpetuity and their honours and privileges would be continued.'

The 'A' class rulers unanimously acted and said that they could not decide unless they got back to their people. I pointed out that the Kalahandi Legislative Assembly had unanimously passed a resolution against the merger in the Orissa Province and so it would not be possible for me to give any opinion regarding that state. The Maharaja of Mayurbhanj stated that unless he asked his Assembly members, he could not make a decision. The meeting was adjourned. I immediately sent a telegram to the Raja Saheb of Korea, President of Eastern States Union and Raja Bahadur of Khairagarh camping at Nagpur informing them that the Orissa Rulers had not signed any merger agreement.

In the evening, Dr Kailashnath Katju, the Governor of Orissa asked all of us for dinner. At dinner Smt Malati Choudhuri, wife of Sri Naba Krushna Chaudhary, Revenue Minister of Orissa, remarked that it reminded her of 'the last supper' of Jesus Christ before his crucifixion. The sadistic taunt by the minister's wife in front of the guests at the state banquet is difficult to erase from memory. There we learnt that the 'B' and 'C' class rulers had already signed the merger agreement. It was learnt later that the Prajamandal leaders met Sri Harekrishna Mahatab at his residence before meeting Sardar Patel. There, Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, Prajamandal leader of Talcher, scolded

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Mahatab for his gullibility and for misleading the state people to agitate for a responsible government.

Some Prajamandal leaders shouted that the right of self-determination should be left with the state people as their ancestors had selected their Rajas, and who had no right to sell the interest of the state people to a third person without consulting them. Mr Mahatab shouted at Pabitra Mohan Pradhan and said that he would be the first person to be shot at, and all these oppositions would be liquidated. These people could not meet Sardar Patel, but attended his meeting in the Town Hall grounds in the evening. Here Sardar Patel said that 'Chorose Leke Kya Dakuko Raj Denge.' This we learnt in the morning papers on the 15 December 1947.

It appeared from the daily papers that by the merger of Orissa States in Orissa Province, and Chhatisgarh States in Central Provinces, Sardar Patel had achieved what Warren Hastings (the Governor General of East India Company) did not achieve. At Nagpur, when the Raja Saheb of Korea and Khairagarh showed my telegram from Cuttack dated 14 December 1947 that the 'A' class states had not signed, Sardar Patel showed my merger agreement to them dated 15 December saying that the Maharaja of Kalahandi must have been drunk when he sent this telegram. This, even though he knew very well that I was a teetotaller.

In Dhenkanal, the Prajamandal workers and the people met the Raja Saheb of Dhenkanal and asked him, why he had signed the merger agreement without asking them when they were agitating for a responsible government *(Dayitwa Mulako Sasana)*. The Raja replied that he had given the *Dayitwa*, i.e. responsibility to the Government of India and *Sasana*, i.e. administration to the Government of Orissa. He had only been left with the *Mulako*, i.e. radish to be handed over to his state's people.

On 31 March I did not attend the Kalahandi State

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Assembly, but sent my message to them to be read by my Secretary. My message to them was as follows:

My beloved people,

I was to address the Assembly today, but as I cannot bear the sight of the funeral of the Assembly which was born at my instance about a year and half ago, I am sending my message to be read by my Secretary.

A meeting was convened for the 'B' and 'C' class states at Cuttack on 14 December 1947 in which Sardar Patel, Deputy Prime Minister of India and Minister of States Department was to preside.

Subsequently, a telegram came inviting the 'A' class rulers also. In response to that wire, I proceeded to Cuttack on 14 December 1947. At 2.30 p.m. the 'A' class rulers met Sardar Patel in the Government House. Sardar Patel stressed the need of the merger of the states with the province of Orissa and addressed the rulers. He pointed out that the people of the states are backward in education and economy. Free India must have uniform development of all parts of the country. We are all of one family and should look at things from this angle. Narrow ideas do not get any scope of development. Orissa will have to be one single unit, a self-supporting province equal to the status and prestige of any other province in India. A new capital has to be built and a High Court has to be developed. The states are the only handicaps. Eastern States Union cannot work. The discipline of the police force is lacking. A strong centre must dictate its policy.

He also stated that insecurity prevails in the states. This is reported by the people. Rulers, Central CID and the Orissa Government, Young Communists, *adivasis* and Prajamandal leaders are creating trouble. The people of the states are demanding responsible government without understanding its implications. Democracy in a small unit will not serve its purpose. So, the burden should be given to the people who will do it more effectively and will not

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> go contrary to the present times. In the union of India, we cannot allow any power which will create lawlessness. So for the development of Orissa and for the security of the states, the merger of the Orissa States with the province of Orissa is the best course. For immediate purposes, the ruler should entrust the administration to the Central Government, and the Central Government to administer the people through the provincial government.

As we could not come to any conclusion, we dispersed. After dinner at the Government House, we, the 'A' class rulers, again met Mr V P Menon, the Secretary of the States Ministry and pointed out various difficulties. I stressed that my association with my people was as long as thousand years. I also said that recently my people had passed a resolution in the Legislative Assembly of the State to the effect that they strongly resented any proposal of amalgamation of this state with the province of Orissa. I was therefore, not in a position to comment on anything for my state without asking my people. That night's meeting also ended without any final conclusions and Mr V P Menon, Mr Senapati and the Revenue Commissioner declared that all negotiations had fallen through. We bade goodbye and departed from Cuttack the next day.

Immediately after returning to my lodge, I sent a telegram to the CP Rulers at Nagpur intimating the break down of all negotiations.

Next morning, at about 9.30 a.m. I was called by the Raja Saheb of Seraikella to meet the other rulers. By the time I went there, the rulers of Patna and Dhenkanal had already gone to meet Mr Menon. When they returned, they were determined to sign the agreement (see Appendix) for the peculiar internal conditions of their own states and spoke to the other rulers that Mr Menon was instructing the DIG of Orissa to march to and take possession of the administration by force of these states where rulers would

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not sign. Following the rulers of Patna and Dhenkanal, the rulers of Gangpur, Sonepur, Seraikella signed and were almost ready to proceed to hand over the agreement to Mr Menon. Then, returning to my lodge I drafted the following letter.

Dear Mr Menon,

Please refer to our talk in the Government House last night. As I told you, the people of my state have passed a resolution in the Legislative Assembly that they strongly disapprove of any idea of merger or amalgamation with the province of Orissa. In one of their recent sessions, they have demanded responsible government to which I have agreed. So under these circumstances, you understand my difficulties.

So I am going to my state by the first available train and will place the same before the people and shall let you know their viewpoints. Till then no steps should be taken regarding my state, as there is perfect peace and tranquillity prevailing there.

Sincerely Yours,

Sd/ P K Deo

I had not even finished my letter when the Ruler of Gangpur came rushing to me and informed me that Sardar Patel and his party had already left for the station and Mr Menon was giving order to the DIG of Police, Orissa to march to those states who had not signed the agreement. He had requested Mr Menon to wait for five minutes to take my signature. So I rushed to see Mr Menon thinking that if the military police would march, there might be bloodshed in the state for which I would be held morally responsible in the durbar of God. I met Mr Menon and handed over the letter, which I wrote before, in front of Raja Saheb of Boudh. He (Mr Menon) replied that the formal reply would be sent from Delhi. In front of Raja

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Saheb of Boudh he told me that he had met the people of my state in the morning and he knew their mentality fully well. I could not believe that my people could have supported the idea of complete merger of their state with Orissa. I told him again that there was perfect peace and tranquillity prevailing in my state and my state is not creating any concern either to the Government of Orissa or to the Union Government. Mr Menon then said that it was in the best interest of myself and my people that I sign the agreement. He would show the people of my state his letter to me if they would want to know the circumstances in which I had signed it. The letter reads thus:

Dear Maharaj Saheb,

I am glad that you signed the agreement. I mentioned to you the peculiar position which your state occupies among the Orissa States. The Government of India is most anxious to maintain law and order. We cannot allow your state to create problems for the Government of Orissa and if you had not signed the agreement, we would have been compelled to take over the administration of your state.

Sincerely Yours,

Sd/ V P Menon

Then I had no alternative but to sign the agreement. Later I addressed the people at Bhawanipatna, 'I must confess that during the unfortunate reign of mine, this ancient state which had so long kept its separate identity, culture and tradition from 1005 AD up-to-date is going to be merged in its greater neighbour. During the rule of the Pathans, Moguls, Marahattas and the English, this ancient state carved by the illustrious Raghunath Shah Deo kept its sovereignty and separate autonomy till today. By the grace of Mother Manikeswari, thirty-one rulers ruled this state

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from the time of Raghunath Sai Deo till date, maintaining a separate identity. But that chapter is going to close very soon, when you have got your unfortunate ruler in me. A chapter of 900 years will close next week.

'The glory of your motherland reached its highest pitch during the time of Maharaj Jugsai Deo, the illustrious Raja Bahadur Udit Pratap Deo and late Maharaja Braja Mohan Deo, the maker of Kalahandi today.

'Let God give us enough strength to bear His will. Today I am reminded of the incident of Jugsaipatna when, sitting on the lap of Patbisi Majhi on that famous stone where my forefathers sat, I made a vow before Mother Goddess Manikeswari that to the best of my ability, I would serve this ancient state and its people till my death. But that is not the will of God. This state is as dear to me as to any of you. I never for a day thought that I was the master of this state.

'I was simply a trustee of this ancient property. I cannot think what answer I will give to my ancestors when I die and now to you all, for my act. I will have to spend the rest of my life as a pensioner getting my pension regularly for no useful work and service to my people. I will be a constant useless drain on the public revenue. I am absolutely in the dark as how I will spend the blank years of this life. People may interpret that in order to secure my privy purse, I sold the interests of six lakhs of the people of Kalahandi to Orissa against their will. But I swear in the name of God that only I can understand my feelings when I signed that agreement. I was getting fifteen per cent on the gross revenue of this state which was trebled during my administration and which had shown enough tendencies to increase in the subsequent years. All costs of maintenance of palace, marriages, other social functions and education charges of my family members used to be borne by the state, as my interests and the state's interests were one. On several occasions, during non-availability of foodstuff at

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Bhawanipatna, I have supplied rations to the people of the town every time at a cheap rate. But now I will get only 7.5 per cent on the 1945-46 revenue of the state. From this I will meet the education and marriage expenses of my children and repair this old palace also. So you can understand the financial gains I am having. My dear people, when God has given this existence, he must have provided adequate provision for this family too. But it will give the greatest pain if, even one of the six lakhs of the people of the state accuse me of selling his or her interest for personal gain. My last request to you all is that if, knowingly or unknowingly, I have done any wrong, please pardon me.

'If any of you at all ever think that my services will be of any use to you, I shall always be at your service. With these words, I close my speech, the last official address of mine as the ruler of this state.

'I pray God that you will prosper better under the new administration.'

During the fifteen days gap from the actual signature of the merger agreement, i.e. 15 December 1947 to 1 January 1948, I drew up a list of some private properties and privileges enjoyed by me to submit to the Government of India. I further disposed off all the files on my desk. During that period I created trusts; one of these was the Anunnata Prajamandal Trust by assigning sixty-four graingollas belonging to the state from which paddy used to be given on loan to the poor cultivators for their agricultural operations.

The trust included several non-official important persons of the state. Its president was Patraja Maheswari Prasad Deo of Lanjigarh, Sri Uchhabananda Pradhan was Vice President and Sri Dayanidhi Naik its Secretary. The Graingollas stocked nearly one lakh tonnes of paddy. The profit from the trust was intended to be given as a scholarship to the meritorious students of the states for

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higher education.

The Second Trust was the Braja Mohan Sahitya Samiti Trust which was created with the donation of Rs1.00 lakh. The State Press was supposed to carry on the promotion of Oriya Literature, continuing to award the annual prize of the state administration to the best Oriya Writer of the year; and to print and publish Oriya books. More particularly, I had in my library, the large number of unpublished palm leaves manuscripts. As per discussion with the Secretary of the State's Ministry at Cuttack, I wanted two assurances, i.e. firstly, security of service of the existing state employees according to the State's Service Code and Rules, and secondly, continuation of the state's annual donation to the Jagannath Temple, Puri, to the Kalinga Historical Society, Brajamohan Sahitya Samiti, Wheeler Club and Library, Kalahandi Athletic Association and Ramachandra Priya Football Tournament which used to be held annually at Bhawanipatna and attracted Football teams, from the adjoining Provinces or States.

On 16 August the Chhattisgarh States also merged in the Central Provinces. So, the apple cart of the Eastern States Union was more or less turned over by these merger agreements. The thirty-nine states comprised an area of 56,000 sq. miles and a population of seven million. If the area of the Mayurbhanj State which signed the merger agreement on 17 October 1948 and was ultimately merged to the Orissa Province on 1 January 1949, is taken into account, the Eastern States Union would have covered an area of 60,000 sq. miles and a population of eight million.

The merger agreement was considered by most of the Prajamandals as their complete betrayal and a demand of their right to self-determination, since most of them were opposed to merge with the adjoining provinces among which their identity would be lost. They wanted the Eastern States Union to function in such a way that they could play

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their role in the administration of this vast track with natural resources like mines and forests, and a tremendous potential for future development. They expected that they could federate to the Indian Union under the new constitution being drafted by the Constituent Assembly. This Eastern States Union would be a viable unit from every aspect.

I am yet to understand the reason why the Government of India did not recognise the Eastern States Union, which was already functioning and helped in the integration. The only reason could be that the deficit Orissa Province and the Backward Central Province could not resist the temptation of the various natural and forest wealth of these areas and wanted to grab them to entrench their colonial economy.

The Eastern States Union comprising Orissa and Chhattisgarh States, which merged on 1 January 1948, had an area of 56,000 sq. miles with immense potentialities for future development. The Vindhya Pradesh Union had an area of 24,000 sq. miles; PEPSU Union had 10,000 sq. miles and the United States of Travancore and Cochin had 10,600 sq. miles. These Unions of State could be recognised by the Ministry of States and fitted in the dominion of India as viable units with their separate legislature, judiciary and executive. We find that even after fifty years of Independence much smaller units like Goa, Deman and Diu, Pondicherry, Haryana, Punjab, Arunachal, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland are separate states in the Indian Union, with their own legislature and cabinet.

The local people felt that they could have been given a right of self-government instead of being thrown to the hungry wolves. Orissa was a chronically deficit state, depending on Central subsidy for its day-to-day administration and was a chronic victim of flood, cyclone

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and drought. But with a much larger population it would dominate in the Provincial Legislature, as the counting of MLA's heads is the major criteria in political decision making. The colonial policy of Orissa regarding the Gadjat area became prominent when the Orissa Government deleted 'Kalahandi' from the list of 'No-industry districts'. It was replaced by 'Balasore'.

After handing over the state's administration to my Dewan, Sri Phakir Charan Mohanty, who was given charge as the new Administrator of Orissa on 1 January 1948, I left for Waltair and stayed in the palace of Bobbili on the seashore, which I had already purchased from the Raja of Bobbili earlier.

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Chapter VI

THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT AGAINST THE MERGER OF STATES

On 1 January 1948, the administration of the Orissa State was taken over by the Civilian Officers of the Orissa Provinces. The transfer of power was peaceful. But some of the administrators seemed to come with different ideas, sent telegrams to the Orissa's Chief Minister; 'The conquest is completed.' On that day, there was wide spread discussion in all the State capitals against the merger with the Orissa Province. In Kharswan, these *adivasis* who protested against the merger were massacred by the Orissa Military Police resulting in more than 2,000 deaths. Spontaneous meetings were held opposing the merger with Orissa. Most of the local leaders took the leadership. In Kalahandi where there was no Prajamandal, some unknown personalities appeared on the platform in the local bazaar and addressed the protest meeting. This had a tremendous impact on the people. Sri Lingaraj Dash Sharma, a vaccinator in the Medical Department of the state, Sri Goura Chandra Panda, advocate, and some tribal leaders addressed a large gathering in Bhawanipatna. This movement in Orissa States was popularly known as the 'Union Movement' as it advocated the formation of the Eastern States Union. This popular upsurge snowballed and brought into limelight several unknown leaders. In Deogarh, the capital of Bamra State, there was a firing on the peaceful procession of the *adivasis* near the SDO's bungalow, invited to meet him in his residence where they were to be handed over their right of

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self-determination.

Nearly thirty-five people died on the spot and many were injured. The first person that received a bullet was Bhalu Kandha, a boy of eighteen years who died on the spot. That blood-drenched earth is still preserved. In Mayurbhanj, there were three firings on the *adivasis* near Bangriposi Ghat where nearly 300 people died. Their leader, Sonaram Majhi, was arrested. In Kalahandi the persons arrested were Sri Lingaraj Dash Sharma of Bhawanipatna, Sri Neelakantha Pattanaik of Medinipur, Sri Maheswar Naik of Bhawanipatna, Sri Govardhan Bhoi of Chiapadar, Sri Giridhari Bhoi of Chiapadar, Sri Krupasindhu Bhoi of Saria, Sri Karunakar Bhoi of Kendupada, Sri Udayanath Patra of Thuapadar, Sri Mohan Pradhan of Bhanpur, Sri Duranta Sabar of Tolbamni, Sri Tike Naik of Pipalbhadi, Sri Jadumani Majhi of Patharla, Sri Dologovinda Naik of Sankutru, Sri Barun Majhi of Kandulguda, Sri Swayambar Majhi of Kasibahal, Sri Bhikari Sahu of Bhawanipatna, Sri Bhagirathi Mishra of Bhawanipatna, Sri Chalan Goud of Bhawanipatna, Sri Govinda Majhi of Dongermurli and Sri Anurjaya Majhi of Kandulguda.

Sri S N Pujhari, who came to Kalahandi as the Administrator, was an extremely nice man, very co-operative and used to take advice from me when necessary. His father was a former employee of the Kalahandi State and he had his earlier education at Bhawanipatna. So the environment was quite congenial to him. All the administrators reported to Sri Neelmani Senapati, ICS, the Chief Administrator at Cuttack, an extremely nice and sociable person.

In spite of the assurance given to the rulers that ex-state employees would be absorbed in the government cadre, Sri Phakir Charan Mohanty, the Dewan of Kalahandi and Sri Basant Kumar Kar, the Dewan of Bamra were served

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notices intimating the termination of their services with immediate effect. I have never understood the reason behind this arbitrary action of Orissa's Chief Minister. It could be because Kalahandi and Bamra were the last two states to sign the merger agreement. Though we were assured that all the actions of the state administration would be scrupulously respected, a special auditor was appointed to audit the accounts of Kalahandi state for the year 1947. The Orissa Government had no right to go into the actions of the state administration prior to 1 January 1948. The auditor, however, brought out a fictitious and one-sided report surcharging me, a sovereign ruler, a repayment of Rs35,00,000. This charge could not stand the test of legality and had to be withdrawn. While the Ahalya Bai Charity Trust of the Maharaja of Indore was respected, the Nawab of Rampur Trust for maintenance of his library and Maharaja of Gwalior Trust of Ganga-jali Fund were scrupulously respected, I cannot understand why the various trusts created by me for the welfare of the state people and for the promotion of Orissa's culture and literature were declared mala fide. They were nullified by the successive government. This was a vindictive action taken by the Orissa Chief Minister. It nullified all the trusts for the welfare of the backward people in the state and for literary and cultural activities.

The Brajamohan Sahitya Samiti Trust, the second oldest literary society in Orissa for promotion of Oriya Literature, the Kalinga Historical Research Trust which employed eminent research scholars like Satyanarayana Rajguru and Kedarnath Mohapatra and published a reputed quarterly Kalinga Historical Journal under the Editorship of Purna Chandra Rath and the Kalahandi Anunnat Prajamandal Trust, which had an asset of nearly Rs30,00,000 in the shape of Graingollas and paddy were nullified by the successive Orissa Government. According to it, they were not legal

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and bona fide. Even the state's annual donation of a small amount to the Jagannath Temple, Puri was also stopped.

Sri Lingaraj Das and Sri Neelakantha Patnaik were arrested and filed habeas corpus petitions in the Orissa High Court. Mr P R Das, the leading advocate of Patna was engaged. Even though these two persons were shifted to the Cuttack jail, were intimidated and later tempted with money and material gains, they stuck to their guns as their petitions were pending in the Patna High Court.

In order to give representation to the state people in the administration of the Orissa Government, Sri Kapileswar Prasad Nanda of Patna, Sri Pabitra Mohan Pradhan of Talcher and Sri Kailash Chandra Mohanty of Nilgiri were appointed as Executive Councillors. They were not elected members of the Orissa Assembly. The Public Relations Officer of Orissa Government, a man in confidence of Sri Mahatab, named Chintamani Mishra, was appointed as their Secretary to oversee them and to find out how loyal they were to Sri Mahatab. The day these three Executive Councillors took oath, they went with their Secretary to Puri and took blessings from Lord Jagannath. While returning from Puri they met with an accident at Satsankha. Kailash Mohanty of Nilgiri died on the spot; the others were badly wounded, and were hospitalised. In the Orissa Assembly, some state leaders were nominated and Sri Natabar Pandey of Gangpur was made the Chief Whip. After witnessing the farce in Orissa Assembly, Dr Natabar Pandey resigned from the Assembly. Similarly Sri Jayasingh Majhi, MLA from Kalahandi, also resigned. They immediately jumped into the popular Union Movement demanding the right of self-determination by the state people to carve their future destiny. The prominent leaders of the movement were Jalandhar Deb of Bamra, Raja Ballav Misra and Upendra Jena of Keonjhar, Dr Natabar Pandey and Sundarmani Patel of Gangpur, Dr Ram Prasad Mishra,

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Purna Chandra Rath, Muralidhar Panda and Sunadhar Bag of Patna, Baidyanath Hota of Athamallik, Lingaraj Dash, Maheswar Naik, J C Singh Deo, Lal Birendranath Singh Deo, Jagajjivanlal Sharma, Giridhar Bhoi and Govardhan Bhoi of Kalahandi.

After a fruitful meeting in Delhi, Sardar Patel advised Mr Mahatab, the Chief Minister, to immediately release all those detainees. The rulers should be given full right to play their role in the democratic set up for the welfare of the country and no impediment should be put on their activities. At that time, I was blessed with a son and Sardar Patel congratulated me, wishing a long life to the baby, recognised as heir apparent of Kalahandi. He was named 'Udit Pratap Deo' after Kalahandi's great ruler.

After this reconciliation with Sardar Patel, I donated Rupees four lakhs to the Orissa Government for the construction of the Engineering College of Burla, as at that time the Orissa Province did not have an Engineering College. Though the amount was accepted, no confirmatory letter came to me from the Orissa Government that this donated amount was earmarked for the construction of Orissa's first Engineering College. It was only in May 1957 and on my insistence that Sri P N Mohanty, IAS, Secretary to Orissa Government wrote the following letter:

Shri P N Mohanty, IAS, Bhubaneswar
Secretary to Government
D.O. No. 7855/Poll.
Std. 46/56
28 May 1957

My Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I am desired to refer to your Highness Demi official letter No. 132 dated, 28 September 1955 of the ex-Chief Minister

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regarding the presentation of shares worth Rupees four lakhs to government for construction of an Engineering College in Orissa and to say that the State Government has been pleased to accept it as a donation from the late Kalahandi Durbar on account of the Engineering College recently constructed at Burla (Sambalpur) along with other such donations.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/-
(P N Mohanty)

To
His Highness Maharaja Pratap
Keshari Deo
Maharaja of Kalahandi

We returned from Delhi with a vow to form an Opposition Party on democratic lines to build a more prosperous and democratic India. We firmly believed that democracy couldn't blossom without an opposition. At that time, the Congress was the only political party. Prior to his death, Mahatma Gandhi had stated more than once in his prayer meetings and had written in *The Harijan,* his mouthpiece, that the Congress should be rounded up since it had achieved its political objective of India's Independence. Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel did not agree to this suggestion, because they wanted to rule the country in the name of Indian National Congress which had a tremendous goodwill of the people. The Mahatma's argument was that since the Congress had been a platform where people of various shades of opinion and political persuasion had come together with the sole objective of making India independent, the organisation should promote political parties with different ideologies. If one traces the evolution of the political system in this country, one can find that in

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India's political history, the Ganatantra Parishad was an outcome of the Union Movement and was the first revolt against one party rule. The Socialist Party of Jaya Prakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Deo and the Krishak Mazdoor Party of Acharya Kripalani were later developments.

I must mention one important incident in the meantime. In the month of January 1948, the Government of India stopped the payment of Rupees fifty-five crores to Pakistan, their due share as per the division of the assets. Mahatma Gandhi persuaded the Government of India to honour the commitment. When it did not listen, he undertook the fast unto death. When his condition became critical the Government of India had to pay Rupees fifty-five crores to Pakistan under duress on 13 January 1948. For the Hindus who got the country bifurcated and their own kith and kin massacred during the partition, it became the last straw on the camel's back. On 30 January 1948 when Mahatma was going for his prayer meeting in the Garden of Birla House, one young man, Nathuram Godse, a Hindu from Pune, shot at him and Mahatma fell on the ground and died shouting 'Hey Ram'. The entire country was shocked. We got the news by the 6 o'clock bulletin of the All India Radio at Bhawanipatna. Sri Neelamani Senapati, the Chief Administrator and Raja of Bamra and I were present in my drawing room when this most shocking news came.

The same night Sri Senapati left for Cuttack. To my great surprise, the next morning Orissa's Chief Minister Sri H K Mahatab wrote in his *Prajatantra* paper dated 31 January 1948 KALAHANDI O MAHATMA GANDHI HATYA. He indirectly implicated me as if I had a hand in Mahatma Gandhi's assassination. This was the height of the gullibility of Sri Mahatab to which Sri N Senapati ICS was a witness.

There was a consistent attempt to erase evidence of the ruler's activities for the welfare of their subjects. For instance, the Maharaja of Sonepur left Rupees one crore

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with Sonepur Trust, the interest of which was to be spent for the welfare of the Sonepur people. When the Sonepur Trust came under the management of the Orissa Government, Sri Mahatab obliterated 'Sonepur' and named it 'The Trust Property' from whose income many development works were undertaken. Some of these were the Sambalpur University, the establishment of the Trust Fund College at Sonepurraj and various other activities outside the Sonepur ex-state area. The Sonepur chair donated to the Calcutta University for Postgraduate study in 'Oriya' was renamed after someone else, though it was originally known as the Sonepur Chair. Future events will prove that Sri Mahatab tried his best to implicate the rulers in various false criminal cases and even to liquidate them. The Raja of Baudh was shot by the government sentry but miraculously survived, with one invalid hand.

On 18 May 1948, the two Orissa states, i.e. Sareikela and Kharswan were taken out of Orissa and their administrations were handed over to the Government of Bihar. This was done on the ground that these two states were island territories in the Singhbhum district and had no geographical contiguity with the Orissa Province. Also, at that time the Maharaja had not signed the Mayurbhanj merger agreement. This created a good deal of discontent throughout Orissa. It roused the sentiment of the Oriya people during the State Re-organisation Commission Movement in 1954.

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Chapter VII

HYDERABAD, AND JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Except the states of Hyderabad and Kashmir, almost all other Indian States adjoining the Indian Dominion became part of India. Hyderabad is considered to be the most trusted ally of the British, and helped the British Empire in its consolidation, had an area much bigger than France. The Nizam of Hyderabad used to be addressed as 'His Exalted Highness' and the heir apparent used to be addressed as the Prince of Berar. At that time, Sir Akbar Hydery, the eminent Dewan of Hyderabad had already retired and the administration was, more or less, run by the Razakars, a fanatic Muslim organisation. Their leader Laik Ali was the Dewan. After the lapse of Paramountcy, the Nizam engaged Mr Montack, an eminent constitutional Barrister of London, to negotiate the terms for its future set up with the Government of India. There was a long parley of correspondence with the State's Ministry, but nothing fruitful was achieved. The Prajamandal Movement in Hyderabad was headed by Swami Ramananda Tirtha, a Saint of Marathawada and in the papers there were daily reports of the atrocities of the Razakars on the majority Hindu population.

If Hyderabad had a seaboard, it would have definitely declared its Independence. But being landlocked, its communication with the outside world was through India. When the relations between Hyderabad and India became tense, all railway communications between Madras and

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Delhi passing through Hyderabad State were cut off. The Great Indian Express in those days was routed through Visakhapatnam and Nagpur. I had once travelled from Kesinga in the same train to Delhi. The Cantonment at Secunderabad was taken over by the Hyderabad Government. Sri K M Munshi who was appointed as a Government of India's Regional Officer at Hyderabad was residing in the Bolarium Residency, the building which the political department had handed over to the State Ministry, was kept as a virtual prisoner. Sardar Patel took a bold step and ordered Lt. General Rajendra Singh of the Southern Command at Poona to start military operation against Hyderabad. This came to be known as police action. There were simultaneous attacks from the Poona side and from the Vezwada side. It took hardly three days to render the Nizam's resistance ineffective. The whole operation was conducted by Major General J N Chowdhury, nephew of the great Sri K N Chowdhury who was killed by a wounded tiger in Kalahandi in 1935. After General Chowdhury reached Hyderabad and took charge of the Secunderabad Cantonment, Sardar Patel landed at Hyderabad Airport.

He was received by the Nizam who, by that time looked completely depressed. After reaching there, Sardar Patel asked him to sign the instrument of accession and the Merger Agreement on the dotted line. The Nizam did so without any hesitation. General Chowdhury was appointed as the Chief Administrator and a popular Ministry was soon formed. All the Razakars were put in jail.

In Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh (a Hindu Dogra) was ruling a predominantly Muslim State. Srinagar was the capital, which was only approachable by a good road from Rawalpindi. The road from Pathankot to Srinagar via Jammu was not all weather and in bad shape. The National Front (Prajamandal) leader in Kashmir was Sheikh Abdulla, a close friend of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1946, when he

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was in jail, Pandit Nehru, Mr Asaf Ali and Dewan Chamanlal wanted to visit him in jail, but their entry to the Kashmir State was prohibited by the Maharaja on the wrong advice of his Dewan, Ramachandra Kak. As soon as they crossed the border, they were arrested. So, Pandit Nehru had a personal grudge against Maharaja Hari Singh. After the partition of the subcontinent, the Maharaja of Kashmir could not decide whether to join India or Pakistan or to remain independent. At that time, Mohammad Jinnah, Governor General of Pakistan manoeuvred a massive attack on Kashmir by the tribals of the North West Frontier Province and some platoons of Pakistan Army in mufti. The attack was so sudden that they easily reached the outskirts of Srinagar city without any resistance. But they took an unusually long time as they started looting and feasting in all the villages when they crossed the border. Nationalist Muslims opposed them. Most prominent among them was one Mr Sherwani who was nailed against a tree and brutally killed.

In the meantime, the Maharaja sent an emergency telegram to Delhi and himself left for Jammu, his winter capital, which is a predominantly Hindu area. The Government of India immediately air dashed its fighting forces to Srinagar as by that time the Srinagar airfield was not captured by the enemy. As the Indian Air Force had very few transport planes, the aeroplanes of various airlines operating in India were commandeered and the troops were sent in day and night. Those who reached there first were asked to hold onto the airport at any cost.

One brilliant officer, Major Somnath Sharma of Kangra lost his life while defending the airport. He was the first holder of the Param Veer Chakra (the highest Indian Military honour) which was posthumously awarded to him. As his place of residence is very close to Sidhabadi Chinmay Mission Ashram in Himachal Pradesh, the Mission runs a

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dispensary in his name. I saw his last letter written to his mother expressing his pride that at last, he was going to fight for his own country and if necessary to lay down his life. He further mentioned that, for all these years he had served as a mercenary soldier under a foreign power.

Simultaneously, Mr V P Menon was sent to Jammu to get the Instrument of Accession and merger to be signed by the Maharaja in favour of the Government of India. Pandit Nehru decided that he would deal with the Kashmir affair himself, since his ancestors were Kashmiries. Fighting was going on in Kashmir under the command of Lt. General Thimaya, one of the most brilliant officers of the Indian Army. After a bitter fight, General Thimaya got full control of the situation. In the meantime, Pakistan raised the Kashmir question in the United Nations. The Security Council wanted immediate cessation of hostilities and the future of Jammu and Kashmir state to be decided by a plebiscite. Pandit Nehru acquiesced in this and there was immediate cessation of firing. A line of areas under actual occupation of India and Pakistan was demarcated. This decision of the Prime Minister came as a tight slap to all Indians because General Thimaya had already promised to clear out all the intruders from Kashmir border within three days. It permanently created bad blood between the two countries who are neighbours by history and geography for all times to come. India's trump card in the United Nations was the instrument of accession of Maharaja Hari Singh to India. The plebiscite was to be held under the United Nations when normalcy would be restored in Jammu and Kashmir. Till today, India cannot be sure which way the popular view will swing if there is a plebiscite.

Some constitutional developments took place and Maharaja Hari Singh abdicated and settled in Bombay. His son, Jubraj Karan Singh was declared Sardar-i-Riyasat, the equivalent of the Governor of a province and Shiekh

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Abdullah was recognised as the Prime Minister of Kashmir. This continued even after the Indian Constitution was adopted in 1950, where all Prime Ministers were made Chief Ministers of States, except Jammu and Kashmir. Under Article 370 of the Constitution, Jammu and Kashmir was given a special status under which Sheikh Abdullah was named Prime Minister. Kashmir had its own flag (not Indian National Flag). It was also free to apply the laws of India in Jammu and Kashmir only if they were approved by the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly. This special status continues even today under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, creating constant trouble and denying other Indian citizens from settling there.

At the intervention of Nehru by a royal warrant, the Maharaja appointed Sheikh Abdullah as Prime Minister on 15 March 1948 with effect from 1 March 1948. The previous Prajasabha was dead. There was no legislature and the Maharaja acted as the figurehead. Though theoretically the Council of Ministers are responsible to the Maharaja, the Maharaja had to act on the concurrence and advice of the Council of Ministers. So, Kashmir got a special status, unlike other states, under Article 370. On 17 October 1949, article 370 numbered as article 306(A) of the draft was considered in the Constituent Assembly. Sri M Gopalaswamy Ayyangar arguing for its inclusion stated, 'One of our commitment to the people is that no such addition be made. So the Legislative authority of the Parliament over Jammu and Kashmir was confined to three subjects: defence, foreign affairs and communication and possible addition to the list could be made with the concurrence of the State Government and a new Constituent Assembly was to be formed to decide the future of the state.'

When Maulana Hazrat Mohani objected to this discrimination, Sri Ayyanger explained the special condition

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of Kashmir. He stated that Jammu and Kashmir was not yet ready for integration and hoped that, in due course, it would become ready like other states. These special conditions were war within the limits of Jammu and Kashmir, a ceasefire being agreed in the UN and it still being on because of unusual and abnormal circumstances, the fact that part of the state was in the hands of enemies, India being entangled with the UNO, the Indian Government's commitment to the people of Kashmir that they be given an opportunity to decide whether they will remain with the Republic or to go their own way by means of a plebiscite under normal conditions, and finally, the Constituent Assembly of the people to determine the constitution of the state vis-a-vis the Union's jurisdiction. So this article was an interim agreement.

The Maharaja of Kashmir renounced his titles, and became only Hari Singh when his political leader decided to abolish the Indian Princes. This dilemma between the old and the new remained with Karan Singh throughout his political career. He became the Sardar-i-Riyasat of Kashmir against his father's wishes, as he believed that the old feudal times had gone for good. He stated, 'And yet I was convinced that the old order had passed, never to return, that whatever the future might hold there was no future for me or my people unless I threw in my lot with Jawaharlal Nehru and the new India that he had done so much to create and was guiding with such courage and foresight.'

Surely, this is an inflated view of oneself for a twenty-one year old youth who had achieved nothing beyond the privilege of being born a prince. In any case, at that time, if anyone was 'shaping the destiny' of Kashmir (leave alone the nation) it was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who was the real king of that state.

The young Yuvaraj, Dr Karan Singh never quite got over the image of himself as an exalted human being. This can be

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clearly seen in the last line of the first volume of his autobiography when, after dismissing the Government of Sheikh Abdullah and ordering his arrest, he describes breaking the news to his wife Yashodra Rajya Lakshmi Devi slowly, 'as I climbed up the steps and walked into her room, "it is over," I said and we both smiled. She was sixteen going on seventeen and I twenty-two going on twenty-three. I was asleep almost before I hit the bed.'

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Chapter VIII

THE FIRST OPPOSITION PARTY - THE GANATANTRA PARISHAD OF ORISSA: MY ROLE AS MLA AND MP TILL 1965

After the fruitful talk with Sardar Patel at Delhi along with the Orissa's premier and other rulers, I returned to Bhawanipatna in October 1948. As per the decision arrived at, habeas corpus on behalf of the detainees was withdrawn in Patna High Court and I got ready to play my part in the democratic set-up of the country as an ordinary citizen. The detainees were released from Cuttack and Bhawanipatna jails and were garlanded by me and others at the jail gate, and were brought to the town in a big procession.

In the afternoon, a public meeting was held at Bhawanipatna. It was decided that a political Opposition Party be formed as it was stressed by all speakers that democracy can only function if there is an effective Opposition Party. A one party rule without cheques and balances was likely to go despotic. Next morning a political party was formed by the name 'Ganatantra Sangha'. If a student of Political Science were to research the political evolution of India he would find that it was in Orissa that the banner of the revolt was first raised against one party rule. After a few months, the various opposition elements in the Western districts of Orissa and the disillusioned Prajamandal leaders of the states held a meeting in Sambalpur. They organised a political party named Koshal

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Utkal Praja Parishad, whose name was changed after a couple of months to Ganatantra Parishad. The name Ganatantra was taken from the Kalahandi Unit of Ganatantra Sangha, and 'Parishad' from Koshal Utkal Praja Parishad. In the Sambalpur meeting, Dr Natabar Pandey, the Chief Whip and the nominated MLA of the Orissa Assembly, who had just resigned in protest, was elected as the President. Sri Rajaballav Mishra became the Secretary. The first convention of the Ganatantra Parishad was held at Bhawanipatna, and a policy statement and a programme were decided. In the meantime, intensive propaganda was made in most of the districts of Orissa and delegates from all the districts of Orissa, with the exception of Ganjam were fully represented. Our organising Secretary, Sri Purna Chandra Rath, the former Secretary of Kalinga Historical Society and Archaeologist of the Patna state, was a dynamic personality. He toured intensively in coastal areas and gave talks in various Bar Associations and Town Halls, and attracted most of the delegates from among the intelligentsia. In the adjoining Koraput district, Pandit Lingaraj Das Sharma, and Jayasingh Majhi, a nominated MLA from Orissa who had resigned, and I made extensive tours and received tremendous response from the people.

Sri Harihar Mishra, the then President of Utkal Sammilani, advocate at Jeypore, became the President. P Subba Rao, an advocate who later became our MP from Koraput was the Vice President. Abhimanyu Rath, an energetic young man was the Secretary.

The movement caught on and moved from strength to strength. Sri Sradhakar Supkar, the leader of the Hirakud Movement, became popular in Sambalpur after he fought the litigation against the Orient Paper Mill for pollution of the Mahanadi. The effluents of the paper mill used to be let out in IB river, a tributary of Mahanadi. He was elected independently to Orissa Legislative Assembly. He was also

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attracted to this Opposition Party and fought the election in 1952.

The Policy Statement and programme of Ganatantra Parishad pointed out that, 'Even though India had attained Independence, there was hardly any joy in living. Peace or prosperity was a big joke for the common man with accompanying scarcity all around. There was an increase of inefficiency and corruption in the administration, which had become callous and irresponsible towards public welfare and public opinion. There was unequal taxation, both direct and indirect, and other antisocial activities had hit the poor middle classes hard. All this was due to one party rule and the tendency of the party in power to put the state above the individual and the party above the state. So, to build a progressive welfare state based on social justice, democracy and individual liberty was the call of the hour. It had become imperative to have an Opposition Party on democratic lines, to safeguard the interest of the common man, to introduce rationality in politics, to rise to a higher moral plane and to revive the ethical values in Indian politics for restoration of fraternity and impartiality of the administration.

'All factors standing in the way of increased production, distribution and discouraging capital investment for national growth were to be eliminated. All vestiges of feudalism had to be ended. Scientific training on a large scale and economic farming should be encouraged for the actual tillers of the soil. Control over everything should go. Wasteful expenditure and squandering of money on ill-conceived schemes must be stopped. More attention was to be paid to irrigation, which would help in greater production of agricultural commodities, so that the price of foodgrains should be brought down. Village and Small Scale Industries should be encouraged. Nationalised industries should run on a competitive basis with private industries.

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'Only such industries like defence production, communication and public utility and those industries which were neglected by private enterprises should be nationalised. All monopolies whether private or state, were to be prevented. More provisions were to be made for Scientific Research and Technology and minimum wages for industrial and agricultural workers were to be guaranteed. Agricultural Income Tax was to be abolished and the purchasing power of rupee restored. The party further demanded an early general election to bring about a psychological change in outlook as essential for the creation of the desired conditions.'

With this programme, we made extensive propaganda in all the districts of Orissa and met with receptive crowds. Simultaneously, District Committees, Subdivisional Committees, Taluk Committees were formed. Many brilliant students of the colleges also took active part in this movement. Apprehensive of the growing popularity of the party, the government under the leadership of Sri Mahatab made regular attempts to break our meetings by his men pelting stones, abuses and by sending drunken *goondas* to create disturbance under the guidance of the Publicity Department of Orissa. He put financial and administrative pressure, began false cases and used other arm-twisting methods. At the same time, he cajoled us by offering financial benefits, position and power to our leaders.

The following exchange of letters will be of interest to the readers.

D.No. No. 313-P/49 *Ministry of States*
New Delhi
17/18 January 1949

My Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I have received reports that your Highness has been organising

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political meetings in Kalahandi state and making speeches criticising the Government of Orissa. Some of the expressions alleged to have been employed by your Highness appear to be definitely objectionable. Having handed over the administration of the state to the Government of Orissa, it is only in the fitness of things that Your Highness should refrain from active political activities at least for some time. This is because the Provincial Government will naturally be reluctant to take any action against you personally and this imposes upon your Highness some reciprocal obligations. I hope your Higlmess will reflect upon this matter in the light of this letter and agree to discontinue activities directed against the Government of Orissa. An early reply will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/ (V P Menon)

His Highness Maharaja
Pratap Keshari Deo
Maharaja of Kalahandi
Bhawanipatna
Confidential D. No. 1/49
Bhawanipatna
30/31 January 1949

My Dear Menon,

Many thanks for your kind DO letter No. 313-P/49 dated 17/18 January 1949. I have been addressing meetings of the Ganatantra Parishad in Kalahandi State. The aim of this party is to educate the illiterate people of our country politically and make them fit for democracy. This party does not believe in extremism of any kind and believes in constitutional methods and in the purity of politics stressed by Bapuji. In the course of discussion of the difficulties, wants and grievances of the people, it is natural that there would be criticism of the administration and the party in power. But I

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do not think that legitimate criticism would be construed as anti-government. So far as my memory goes, I do not think I have ever said anything objectionable. It is the usual habit of the Orissa politicians to misrepresent and exaggerate facts. There is also an unhealthy tendency to crush all opposition.

I hope the central government will take a broader view of things. I shall explain the real position and clear the misunderstanding, if any, when we meet next. I will be in Delhi in the 3rd week of February.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/ (P K Deo)

(H H Maharaja of Kalahandi)

To

Rao Bahadur V P Menon, CSI, CIE
Political Advisor to the Ministry of States
Government of India
New Delhi

Raja Saheb of Boudh, who was not a member of our party but a big supporter, was not in the good books of the government. In the second week of February 1949, I, with my family members and the Raja Saheb of Boudh were returning from Daspalla after attending the sacred thread ceremony of the Jubraj there. I was astonished at the tremendous reception he got in all the villages of Boudh State. We passed through a mile long procession in the Boudhraj town. This convinced me of his tremendous popularity. On 19 February 1949, when he was sitting on the outside verandah of his drawing room, the Orissa Government's Sentry provided people to guard the palaces of all rulers as a privilege matter of honour, who fired point-blank on the left chest of Raja Saheb. Luckily he had a pocket diary in the left pocket of his coat. So the bullet did not hit his heart, but was diverted and injured his left arm,

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taking away a lump of flesh. His escape was miraculous. Immediately, the Raja Saheb, holding his wounded left arm with his right arm, ran in a zigzag manner to enter inside the Rani Mahal. The Police Sentry ran after him and fired three shots at him. But having missed him, the bullets hit the walls of the Rani Mahal. After that, the sentry immediately went and surrendered himself in the local police station and was locked in the *hazat*. In the meantime, there was a large gathering of thousands of people near the Palace, demanding the release of that constable in order to lynch him. Mr S N Sharma, my Private Secretary, was well known in the area and had worked as the SDO at Boudh. He very tactfully managed the situation and immediately sent the Raja Saheb to the hospital with official escort. With the Raja Saheb, nearly 100 local people went on their own to Calcutta. He was treated in the Presidency Hospital in Calcutta and it took a long time for him to recover.

But his left arm became completely useless. After this, he never returned to Boudh and permanently stayed at No. 1, Guru Saday Road, Baligunj, Calcutta. Continuous streams of visitors from Boudh used to go to meet him till he died, in Calcutta. I could not keep track of the case against the constable and don't know what ultimately happened to him. The question of whether the Sentry ran amuck or was instructed to do this gruesome act, was never answered. It is for the readers to draw their conclusions.

While the Constitution of India was being drafted in the Constituent Assembly, I had the occasion of visiting Delhi and cultivating personal relationships with the Members of the Constituent Assembly. As Sri Pattabhi Sitaramayya was the President of the State People's Conference, I personally knew him and developed friendship with him. On 15 August 1949, on India's Third Independence Anniversary, I sent a congratulatory telegram to him, as he happened to be the President of the Indian National Congress. He replied

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to me as follows:

Telegram: Congress: Telephone 40320
All India Congress Committee
7, Jantar Mantar Road
New Delhi

President
B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya:
General Secretaries *Dated: 18.8.1949*
19 Canning Lane,
Shankar Rao Deo
Kala Venkata Rao

Dear Raja Saheb,

Many thanks for your telegram concerning the 15 August. But permit me to ask you that who are you that you should telegraph to me when it would have been equally or more appropriate had I telegraphed in like terms to you. The sacrifices that you, the princes, have made, are much greater than those made by the people of India.

Yours sincerely,

Sd/ (B Pattabhi Saitaramayya)

To
Maharaja of Kalahandi

From this, it is clear that the Congress leaders at the top were very cordial and sympathetic to the rulers. But the Congress leadership in Orissa was just the opposite. It cannot be anything other than jealousy of the rulers and their popularity in their respective areas. At the Delhi meeting with Sardar Patel, Sri Mahatab, Chief Minister of Orissa ridiculed Sri R N Singh Deo of Patna by making the 'Zero Mudra' with his hand. In Indian Scriptures, we call this the 'Gyana Mudra' i.e. 'the ego surrendering before the Almighty.' Sardar Patel had a big laugh and said that 'we carry

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on our political propaganda in a democratic and peaceful way; the results would be known in the elections.' Because of the growing popularity of Ganatantra Parishad and the mismanagement of Orissa administration, Sri Mahatab was shifted to Bombay as Governor. Sri Naba Krushna Chaudhury became the Chief Minister of Orissa, before the first General Elections.

From 1948 onwards, we the founder members of Ganatantra Parishad, were very hard up to carry the message of this new party to the interior villages of Western Orissa. In spite of various limitations, most of the workers worked with a missionary zeal. Besides my intensive tours to all the 2000 and odd villages in the erstwhile Kalahandi state, I concentrated in Koraput district where the Zamindari system is still prevailing. In my tour to Koraput district, I was the guest of Maharaja Vikram Deo Verma of Jeypore, though his son-in-law Kumar Bidyadhar Singh was a supporter of the Congress Party. Even in the 1942 movement, the Congress organisation had gone to the grassroots and the people had openly revolted against the British Government leading to two firings and the hanging of Sri Laxman Naik. But after Independence, the people of that area were completely disillusioned with the Congress rule and as the result of 1952 elections showed, we got seven out of eleven Assembly seats and one Lok Sabha seat. In the Koraput organisation, I would like to record my appreciation for the guidance and sympathy of the veteran Harihar Mishra, who worked for Utkal Sammilani for the amalgamation of the outlying Oriya tracks in Madras Presidency with Orissa and also Dr A R Khan. Another dynamic young man was Sri Abhimanyu Rath who later became our Rajya Sabha Member. I would like to mention the name of the leading advocate, Ponnada Subba Rao, who became member of the Lok Sabha from Koraput. It may be mentioned that we gave financial help of Rs500 only to each candidate and they won.

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Though Sri Sadasiv Tripathy was the sitting Minister in Orissa, he escaped defeat by a narrow margin. Sri R K Biswas Ray, former Minister and DCC President, and Kumar Bidyadhar Singh, the Maharaja's son-in-law, lost badly. In Phulbani, we could not make much headway and did not put up a single candidate. But Dr Natabar Pandey, MP of Sambalpur polled maximum votes from the Phulbani district for his Parliament seat. When organised, in 1957, four out of four won. In Bolangir, though Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru addressed a massive election meeting, we got all the nine seats. Sri Kapileswar Prasad Nanda, a prominent Prajamandal leader and sitting Executive Councillor of Orissa Cabinet, lost his deposit. Similarly in Jodhpur, the Congress had to eat humble pie. Though Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru personally went to canvass for Pandit Jayanarayan Vyas, former Prajamandal President and the then Chief Minister of Rajasthan, he lost to Maharaja Hanuwant Singh of Jodhpur and forfeited his deposit. Alas! Few days later on 26 January 1952 when the Maharaja was flying solo in his own plane, he died in a plane crash under suspicious circumstances. It was later learnt that a piece of cotton wool was found in the carburettor of the plane. In Sambalpur the atmosphere was anti-Congress because of the anti-Hirakud movement, and Sri Sradhakar Supakar who got elected independently later, joined our party. In the erstwhile Bamra state of Sambalpur district, there was firing and bloodshed during the Union Movement. Thus, in Sambalpur district we got five seats, which improved to seven in 1957. In Kalahandi we won four seats which improved to six in 1957. In Keonjhar and Sundergarh districts we did fairly well. We could not get time to organise ourselves in the coastal districts. However, we could get one seat, i.e. Badamba in Cuttack district.

Thus, the outcome of the first election was fairly satisfactory as we got thirty-one seats out of the forty-five contested and emerged as the second largest group in the

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Assembly and had as our Leader of the Opposition, Sri Sradhakar Supakar who had prior Assembly experience. To that Lok Sabha we sent five MPs. Various independent members of splinter groups and Ganatantra Parishad formed the National Democratic Front, with Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee as its Leader, B Ramachandra Rao as its Deputy Leader and Sri R N Singh Deo Maharaja of Patna, as the Secretary of the Parliamentary group. Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was the best Parliamentarian in the first Lok Sabha and was known as the Edmond Burke of Indian Parliament. He was the former President of Hindu Mahasabha and was the Deputy Chief Minister of the United Front Government in Bengal under Mr Fazlool Haque. Later, he was the Industry Minister in the Cabinet of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in the Centre and resigned on the issue of neglect of the East Bengal Refugees by the government.

He later contested from South Calcutta as the Hindu Mahasabha candidate and got elected. Other two Hindu Mahasabha members were Sri N C Chatterjee, the eminent Jurist, and Barrister Sri U N Trivedi from Chittor. In the Rajya Sabha, we had two MPs. In 1952, when the Jana Sangha Party was formed in Kanpur, Sri Prafulla Chandra Bhanj Deo, our Orissa Rajya Sabha MP and Sri R N Singh Deo of the Lok Sabha represented Ganatantra Parishad to bless the formation of all India Rightist Party based on Indian Tradition and Nationalism. Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee was the secretary of Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Sri Balraj Madhok and Sri Jagannath Rao Joshi were the organisers of the Jana Sangha in North India and South India respectively. The Secretary was Sri Deen Dayal Upadhyaya.

The first day of the Orissa Assembly was marked by my point of order, when I challenged the legality of the Deputy Ministers in participating in the Election of the Speaker, since they were disqualified from holding office. This

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disqualification was removed later by an act. But the pro-term speaker, Sri S N Bhanj Deo, gave a wrong ruling permitting the Deputy Ministers to participate in the election and the government survived the defeat. A more correct ruling by the speaker would have changed the entire political scenario.

We, being the main Opposition in the State Assembly, took great interest in all the debates projecting the image of the party in the coastal districts and did our job well. I was the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. In a House of 140, the Congress could get only fifty-four seats, needing another seventeen to make a majority of seventy-one. At that moment, Sri Biju Pattanaik, MLA from Cuttack did resort to all illegal methods to encourage defections from the opposition ranks by offering fishes and loaves and promising all sort of things. In the first inglorious defection of politics, Naba Krushna Choudhury Ministry in Orissa had seven defectors from the *Adivasi* Congress under Sri Sunaram Soren. All those from Mayurbhanj district and Sunaram Soren were made Cabinet Ministers. The rest were independent members. Out of them, V Seetharamaya, an independent MLA from Chatrapur, was made Chairman of the Khadi and Gramodyog Board and the rest of independents were made chairmen of various boards.

The Indian National Congress Organisation was built on a linguistic basis. In the Provinces of Bihar and Orissa, there were two PCC Presidents Dr Rajendra Prasad for Bihar and Pandit Neelakantha Das for Orissa.

In the Madras Presidency also, Sri C Rajagopalachari was the President of the Tamil Provincial Congress Committee and Sri T Prakasam for the Andhra Provincial Congress Committee. So, after Independence there was constant demand to re-organise states on a linguistic basis. By that time Orissa was already a separate state, but the Singhbhum district Congress Committee was under the PCC President

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of Orissa. So there was a constant demand from the Telugu speaking people to have a separate state. With similar agitations starting in the rest of the country, Sri Potti Sreeramulu undertook a fast unto death for the achievement of Andhra Pradesh. In spite of persuasion from the central leaders, he continued his fast and expired for the cause of Andhra Pradesh. This supreme sacrifice ignited agitation throughout the Northern Sarkar and Rayalseema areas. The administration, communication, and railway traffic were completely paralysed. The Centre was forced to bifurcate the Madras Presidency and Andhra Pradesh was formed, with Sri T Prakasam as its Chief Minister with its capital at Karnool. As there were a large number of Telugu speaking people in Telengana area of Hyderabad state they clamoured under the leadership of Dr Jaya Surya and others to bifurcate the Hyderabad state which had three distinct linguistic regions, i.e. Marathawada, speaking Marathi, the adjoining Bombay Presidency and the South-Western districts of Hyderabad speaking Kanarees. All wanted to be part of a state. In Maharashtra also, the Gujaratees, Marathas and Kannadigas wanted to have their separate states. A State's Re-organisation Committee was appointed by the Centre to re-organise states on a linguistic basis since Hyderabad and other Princely States had to be merged in India. Though the decision was universally acclaimed, one sane voice came from Rajagopalachari who said that the linguistic boundary could not be demarcated strictly on the basis of language. There would be dissension and inter-linguistic quarrels could create bad blood between neighbours and that could become a big problem. It is true that even after fifty years of Independence, the bad blood still persists in the Maharashtra Karnataka dispute, Bihar Orissa dispute, Haryana Punjab border dispute and clamours are raised for protection of minority rights. One has to appreciate the foresight of the old statesman who expected trouble. Maybe, we should have paid more heed to

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his suggestion of dividing India by latitudes and longitudes, as is done in the United States of America.

As anticipated, the outcome of the State's Re-organisation Committee's report was like opening of the Pandora's box. Spontaneous trouble started coming from usually quiet and peaceful areas. Prior to submission of the report, the State Re-organisation Commission headed by Justice Fazal Ali extensively toured all the states and received memoranda for drawing the lines on the basis of language.

When they visited Orissa, the Orissa Government and we, the members of the Utkal Sammilani (the only Oriya organisation born in the early part of the twentieth century fighting for the unification of the Oriya tracks into one administrative unit) submitted memoranda to the S R C Commission to amalgamate the two erstwhile Oriya states, Sareikela and Kharswan, now part of Bihar, the bordering Oriya speaking areas in Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal into Orissa. We had a very strong case for the inclusion of Sareikela and Kharswan in Orissa, because after the amalgamation of Mayurbhanj in Orissa in 1949, their geographical continuity was established with the rest of Orissa, since these two states were taken out of Orissa even though they first merged to Orissa Province. The situation changed after Mayurbhanj became a part of Orissa and with majority of Oriya population in Kharswan and Sareikela being Oriya, it became a cultural centre of Oriya literature, art, music and particularly Chhou dance. Orissa's case was very strong. But the S R C's report came as a rude shock to the Orissa Government as they did not accept their genuine demand. The report did not contain any reason. It was, no doubt, the result of political pull of the heavy weights in the Congress Party at the Centre. It is because of Dr Rajendra Prasad and Sri Govinda Ballav Pant that the then boundaries of Bihar and UP were not disturbed and Orissa got a raw deal. There was a great emotional upheaval among the Oriya

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people. Under the moral and political pressure of public opinion, Sri Naba Krushna Choudhury, the Chief Minister of Orissa, submitted his resignation. However, after a couple of days, he withdrew it due to Central political pressure.

We, the members of Utkal Sammilini under the leadership of Sri R N Singh Deo, then its President, launched a massive non-violent agitation and many courted arrests, like Sri R N Singh Deo, Pandit Neelakantha Das, Pandit Godavarish Mishra, Sri Surendranath Dwivedi, Sri Banka Bihari Das, Sri Nisamani Khuntia, Sri Harihar Patel, Sri Sundarmani Patel and many others were put in Cuttack jail. Section 144 Cr. PC and curfew were clamped down in most of the towns. Platoons of Central Reserve Police were posted at all the district headquarters and normal life and business was at a standstill. At Cuttack, police fired on a procession and Sunil De died on the spot and two others were injured. At Puri, a student of a Primary School named Bengapania died on the Grand Road when police resorted to firing on the crowd. The frenzied mob outnumbered the police and took his dead body in procession and gheraoed the SP's bungalow and burnt the Puri Railway Station. Railway traffic throughout Orissa was jammed due to the removal of fishplates.

More contingents of Central Gurkha force were sent to Puri and a reign of terror prevailed in the town due to indiscriminate beating of the people, the molesting of women and day and night curfew being imposed in the town. Sri J C Singh Deo, MLA, Sri Bairagi Dwivedi, Sri Dukhibandhu Swain and I were selected to break the Section 144 Cr. PC and court arrest at Puri. I gave notice to the Collector and SP of Puri town to address a public meeting at 5 p.m. My friend Dr Mahesh Pati, the Civil Surgeon of Puri and the Superintendent of the District Jail phoned to tell me that comfortable accommodation had been provided for me in the jail barracks and that we would be looked after well.

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My father-in-law, Raja Ramachandra Deb of Puri blessed me and cautioned me not to eat food in the jail, as he would be sending meals from the Puri palace kitchen. The atmosphere was absolutely tense before 5 p.m. when the police van announced in the mike that Section 144 has been lifted. What a tremendous joy the Puri people displayed when normal life was restored. The people who had kept themselves inside their houses for seven days came out in large numbers to do their marketing in the evening. The whole grand road was completely jam-packed and at 10 p.m., I addressed a meeting in front of the Puri Temple, where there was a large gathering. The meeting lasted till 3 a.m. as there were more than thirty speakers who came out on their own and narrated the harrowing experience of the last seven days. The meeting ended in the early hours with everyone shouting 'Jai Jagannath'.

Then we were told to carry our agitation to Sareikela and Kharswan. On 7 February 1954, while we were addressing a meeting in Sareikela town, some rowdy elements of Jamshedpur town under the leadership of the Sub-Inspector of Police, Sareikela, attacked us with *lathis* and pelted stones, in the meeting. I was taking some pictures with my camera when I received a *lathi* blow on my head and fell unconscious. I had bought this Canon camera in 1953 when we went to Europe and UK to attend the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. I was, however, saved by the timely intervention of Sri Abhimanyu Rath and my nephew Sri Satabahnu Singh Deo. I was taken to the local hospital and it was found out that there was a crack on my skull, wound on my scalp and fractures on my right hand. Next day, I was taken to Calcutta where I was in a Nursing Home for three months before I completely recovered.

Sri R N Singh Deo's, member of Lok Sabha, book *The Rape of Democracy*, which included my photographs, was circulated among the Members of Parliament. It created a big

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commotion throughout the country. We, the members of the Ganatantra Parishad in the Orissa Assembly, resigned in protest against the injustice done to Orissa.

The Indo-Pakistan efforts for peace and the bilateral talks between the two Prime Ministers were jeopardised by an internal development in Kashmir. When India wanted to extend the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court to Kashmir and wanted the integration of the state finances, which were in deficit with those of India, Sheikh Abdullah objected to Hindu imperialism. The situation became grave in May with the detention of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the Jana Sangha President, who later died in Srinagar jail.

In July, Sheikh Abdullah talked openly about Kashmir's Independence. The elected head of the state, Dr Karan Singh, the Sadar-i-Riyasat, dismissed Sheikh Abdullah under the advice of the Government of India in August. This was done on grounds of corruption and insolvency in the state. This influenced Pakistan. What a mistake the government made by not agreeing to the total integration of Kashmir with India. We are reaping the evil fruits of this today. The dispute was internationalised. The killing of militants and our security forces filled the headlines of newspapers.

Another mistake was committed in April when a treaty was signed with China recognising the latter's sovereignty over Tibet thereby bringing the Chinese Government right to our very borders. Till then, Tibet acted as a buffer between India and China. Our Ambassador, K M Panikar, did the mischief. He was reported to be a fellow traveller of the Communist Party and witnessed the passing away of China from Chiang Kai-shek to Mao Tse-tung. That year, my mother and grandmother went to Kumbhamela in Allahabad in the winter and I learnt that about three lakh people died in the stampede. I was very worried till I got the news that they were safe.

Before the second general election, there was a change in

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the leadership of the Orissa Congress Assembly Party, as a large number of Congress MLAs, including ministers, gave a memorandum to the Congress High Command to bring back Mr Harekrishna Mahatab from the Governorship of Bombay to save the sagging image of the Congress Party. A day before Mr Mahatab came, Sri Nabakrishna Chowdhury submitted his resignation and went in the state car to be dropped at Jharsuguda Station. Representing the Opposition, I and Sri Sadasiv Tripathy, his Cabinet Minister, went to Jharsuguda by car to see him off. He bought a third-class ticket on the Bombay Mail to go to his son-in-law's place in Ahmedabad. His daughter Uttara was married to Sri Narayan Desai, son of Sri Mahadev Desai, Personal Secretary of Mahatma Gandhi. He carried his small suitcase and his bedding wrapped in a durrie. He spread it in the third class passenger's hall. As the train was to come at 3 a.m., he asked us to return, expressing his gratitude. I really admired that man and though we differed politically, I have high regards for him. When I contested in 1967 as a Swatantra candidate for the Lok Sabha, he, though out of politics, associated in the Bhoodan movement, came all the way to canvass for me.

With a garland of fifty-five lotus flowers, Mahatab came back to Bhubaneswar with the entire fanfare and conducted the second general election. The 1957 result showed that in the Lok Sabha our strength improved from five to seven and in the local Assembly from thirty-one to fifty-two against the Congress's fifty-four. Sri R N Singh Deo became our leader. When he made a claim to form the government with the help of the P S P. Party, Sri Bhimsen Sachar, the then Governor of Orissa asked Sri Mahatab to form the Ministry. As he did not have the requisite strength of seventy-one MLAs in a house of 140, he started provoking defections from other parties. Mahatab's Congress Ministry did not last long.

In the Parliament, after the CPI and PSP, our strength was third in the Opposition, having seven members. Dr

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Rammohan Lohia's Socialist Party had five members with Sri P V G Raju, Maharaja of Vizianagaram as the leader of the Socialist Party. The fifth force was the Jana Sangha with Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee as the leader, with three MPs, which improved to four when Professor Balraj Madhok came in the by-election from Delhi.

The main topic in the Second Lok Sabha was the Chinese occupation in Akshai-Chin in Kashmir and claiming Barahoti in Uttar Pradesh and the entire area in the North-Eastern region from the Himalayas up to the Brahmaputra river.

Till 1958, the Government of India was completely unaware that the Chinese had already occupied 95,000 sq. kms. of the Ladakh area and had built a highway connecting Gangtok in Tibet to Yarkand in the Sinkiang Province of China. There was heavy military installation on the Chinese side. Our intelligence was so poor that we never had an inkling till then. Our Prime Minister was busy in the Bandung Conference associated with the non-aligned movement and was hosting Mr Chou En-lai, the Chinese Premier, and was toasting 'Hindi-Chinese Bhai Bhai'. When Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee and the author initiated a debate in the Lok Sabha and it was flashed in all the papers, the country knew about it. Prime Minister Nehru, while replying, stated that 'not a blade of grass grows in that barren region and we hardly go there, though it is a part of Jammu and Kashmir state. Sometimes, we go with our flag.'

After a good deal of opposition, the Government of India came out with a white paper. A dialogue was begun on 12 September 1959, to demarcate the India China border.

The Chinese repudiated the 1842 Peace Treaty concluded by the local authorities of Tibet and Kashmir on the ground that the Chinese Government did not send anybody to participate in the conclusion of the treaty. However, Mr Chou En-lai, during his visit in 1956, had accepted the MacMohan Line as the Sino-Indian border. But in his latest

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letter, he completely denied it. These incidents clearly unfolded the Chinese mind. China has committed aggression on this country.

On 13 November 1959 when El-Salvador raised the question of the Chinese aggression on Tibet in the Steering Committee of the UN, India's representative Jam Saheb stated, 'the objective will be achieved by abandoning this item for some time hoping for a peaceful settlement on the autonomy of Tibet while maintaining the suzerainty of China.' By that time His Holiness, the Dalai Lama had crossed the Indian border on 31 March of the same year to take asylum in India. He was followed by a large number of Tibetian refugees who later settled down in Dharmasala in the Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. The utterance of Jam Saheb in United States was most disappointing.

In the same year, in the Nagpur Session of the Indian National Congress when a resolution was passed for Land Reforms and Co-operative Farming, Professor N G Ranga, a senior member in the National Executive and Sri Charan Singh, a senior minister in Uttar Pradesh, left the Congress Party. They organised Kisan Movements in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, which attracted large followings. In June, the same year, Sri C Rajagopalachari, former Governor General of India formed the Swatantra Party in Opposition to the Ruling Congress Party. Its main platform was to oppose the programme of joint co-operative farming and to provide proprietary rights to the farmers, abolition of control, licence and quota permits to establish free enterprise and market economy and to abolish manufacture of nuclear weapons. To propagate such ideas, rightist thinking was unthinkable when the atmosphere was saturated with catchy socialist slogans. The author, as the leader of Ganatantra Parishad, established good rapport with the new Swatantra group of Parliament consisting of Professor N G Ranga, Mr M R Masani, Mr Matin and a couple of others in the Lok

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Sabha.

In the 1957 Assembly Elections, the Congress Party under Sri Harekrushna Mahatab secured only fifty-six seats in a House of 140, securing less than thirty-nine per cent of the total votes polled. The Ganatantra Parishad got fifty-two MLAs.

Sri Harekrishna Mahatab did not expect the miserable performance of the Congress in 1957 elections and did not take the verdict of the voters in a sportive manner. After manipulating the formation of a minority government with the help of the defectors, his first executive action was to abolish the allowances of the relatives of the rulers. The previous governments sanctioned these allowances and as per the merger agreement, the successor government had to honour these allowances as well as pensions paid to the former state employees. This executive fiat was challenged in a writ petition in the Supreme Court by my mother Maharajamata Suratarangini Devi and my brother Maharaj Kumar Bira Keshari Deo. The result of the litigation went in favour of the relatives of the rulers and the Supreme Court ordered all the arrears to be paid. But the Supreme Court's verdict came in 1960. Till that time, the relatives underwent a hard time and some of them like Lal Sri Prafulla Chandra Bhanj Deo, MP and many others who had already expired, could not enjoy the benefits of the Supreme Court's decision. In the 1957 elections, I got elected to the Lok Sabha where I was elected as the leader of the Ganatantra group of seven Members of Parliament in Lok Sabha and four in Rajya Sabha. This was too much for Mr Mahatab to digest. He wrote to Sri Govind Ballabh Pant, the Home Minister of the Government of India that I was responsible for creating disturbance in Puri, which led to firing and accused me of having burnt the Puri Railway Station.

I replied to the Home Minister challenging the allegation and asking for an independent judicial enquiry. I suggested

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that if the charge was proved, I would resign from Parliament; conversely, if it was proved to be false, Sri Mahatab should be made to resign from the Chief Ministership of Orissa. However, the Home Minister did not want to go further into the matter and told me not to insist. The then Governor, Sri Bhimsen Sachar called Mr Mahatab to form the Orissa Government. He undertook all sorts of dubious methods to encourage defections from the Opposition parties. The defectors were offered fishes and loaves. Sri Himansu Sekhar Padhi, a Ganatantra Parishad MLA, was made a minister and a member of the AICC overnight. As many as fourteen MLAs of Ganatantra Parishad defected and Mahatab formed an unstable government. His main lieutenant was Sri Biju Pattanaik, then a MLA. But some of the staunch MLAs stuck to their own party in spite of tremendous temptations. In this context, I must mention the name of Sri Anirudha Deep who was the only man who remained in his original party even though all the MLAs from the Phulbani district joined the Congress.

In 1959 when the Orissa Budget Session was going on, I went from Delhi to Bhubaneswar. Seeing me in the visitor's gallery, all the Ganatantra Parishad MLAs for whose success I had worked met me after that day's session and told the speaker that they were going back to their original party. That day, the Home Department's demand of the Orissa Budget was passed by the majority of a single vote. So, when the Assembly met the next day, the government was bound to fall as seven MLAs came back to the Opposition. That evening we had a get-together in the house of Sri Udit Pratap Deo, MLA (Raja of Gangpur and MLA from Sundergarh) when, all of a sudden, Sri Biju Pattanaik arrived and started slapping Sri Anup Singh Deo, a Congress MLA who had also opted to join the Opposition Party. In return, Sri Biju Pattanaik also received several blows and his shirt was torn. When he filed the FIR in the Capital Police Station, the

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officer-in-charge took no cognisance, as there was no grievous hurt. I believe there was a meeting in the Chief Minister's house along with Sri Lingaraj Panigrahi, the then Home Minister and others about how to save the ministry, which was about to fall. Next morning Sri G Pattnaik, SP, Puri, arrived all of a sudden and arrested seven of us on the charge of possessing more foreign liquor than the sanctioned quantity. I am a teetotaller. The Raja of Gangpur had few bottles with him. We were arrested and taken to Khurda Court. However, as it was late, we could not get bail and were dumped in the Khurda Sub-jail. Next day was Sunday. On Monday, we heard in the radio that there was an unprecedented walk out in the Lok Sabha by all opposition parties headed by Sri S A Dange. Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister, gave a statement in the Lok Sabha disapproving the action of the Orissa Government for arresting the MLAs and MPs when the Assembly and the Parliament were in the Session and thus depriving them of their parliamentary duties.

On Monday, we were all freed and as per the instructions of Pandit Nehru who was then the President of Indian National Congress, negotiations had begun with the Ganatantra Parishad to have a coalition government on an agreed programme. After much discussion, a programme was agreed to, and for the first time a coalition government in India was formed between the Congress and the Ganatantra Parishad. Sri H K Mahatab was the Chief Minister and Sri R N Singh Deo was the Deputy Chief Minister and the Finance Minister. We had five ministers and Congress had seven ministers.

The coalition government functioned exceedingly well. The Rajkot Session of the All India Congress Committee under the Chairmanship of Sri U N Dhebar passed a resolution commending the working of the coalition experiment in Orissa.

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At that time we had an excellent Minister for Irrigation and Power in Sri S N Bhanj Deo, Raja of Kanika who fully appreciated the proposal of the Upper Indravati Project which had been kept in cold storage for all these years. This, in spite of very favourable reports by Mr Baxter, Chief Engineer, Bombay Presidency and Sri Bhubaneswar Behera, the State Engineer who was educated at state's expense in the USA and had practical training in the Tennessee Valley Project and who had given a comprehensive report after taking great pains in the investigation of all the data required, on Sri S N Bhanj Deo's orders an Investigation Division of Indravati Irrigation Project begun at Bhawanipatna. As there was no government land available, I donated ten acres of my lands for this Division, which was later upgraded as the Irrigation Circle of Western Orissa.

Even though the coalition experiment did exceedingly good work and was being appreciated by all concerned, the moment Sri Biju Pattanaik was elected as the President of Orissa Pradesh Congress Committee defeating Mr Mahatab's candidate, Sri Banamali Pattnaik, he got a resolution passed in the PCC to put an end to the coalition. He recommended a mid-term poll for the Orissa Legislative Assembly. At that time, I was the President of Ganatantra Parishad, Orissa, and conducted the election with practically no resources. In this 1961 mid-term poll, our strength was reduced to thirty-one. The Congress attained absolute majority with Sri Biju Pattanaik as the Chief Minister.

At this crucial moment I took the initiative to contact Sri C Rajagopalachari, Professor N G Ranga, Sri K M Munsi, Sri M R Masani and Sir Homi Mody, the stalwarts of Swatantra Party. We became a branch of this All India Party at the state level. The Swatantra Party had little unlike the Ganatantra Parishad in Orissa, though they had few members and had a nominated committee on an ad hoc basis. I led a delegation to the General Council meeting of threadbare Swatantra

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Party at Baroda and we discussed everything with the office bearers of both the parties. After finding that there were many common factors, we passed a resolution at the Sundergarh Conference to merge our party and contest the 1962 Lok Sabha as Swatantra Party members.

I must say with all my reverence that the most respected Indian I have met so far was Sri C Rajagopalachari. His clarity of vision, critical analysis and answer to any complex problem facing the world and country; his forecasting the complete collapse of the Communist experiment before the end of the century; his advocacy that 'the consumer is the king' and 'the man's cottage is his castle', that socialism impeded the growth of national products and lastly his warning to the world to completely do away with all nuclear weapons were all such axiomatic truths. Thirty years later, we saw in 1989 that USSR and other satellite communist countries totally gave up the ideology of communism, even abolishing their party in their homelands. The institution of private property was established. Freedom of speech was given. The worker's right to trade unions was accepted. The Berlin Wall, which divided East and West Germany was torn down. Gorbachev's ideas of *glasnost* and *perestroika* and his approaching the Pope at the Vatican to revive the defunct churches and preach religious and moral values among the citizens of USSR were all forecast by this great man. In 1959, Rajagopalachari predicted same things when he formed the Swatantra Party. He could see things ahead by thirty years. What a Man! In that old age of eighty-six, he went on his first foreign trip to convince the American President, John F Kennedy to put a stop to the manufacture of atom bomb. All along, he preached *Dharma* (according to him a moral code of conduct) for the conduct of any business by the state or individual. He preached *Sarvadharma Sama-bhava* and did not find any difference between religions, when bereft of rituals. Rajaji is no more, but his ideas have conquered the world.

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They would be fully achieved if we were to have a World Government and all problems would be solved with a world perspective. India or Bharat has always been the pathfinder of the world. Let us see what it will do in the twenty-first century.

We fought the Third General Election in 1962 on the Swatantra ticket and got 8.25 per cent votes in the country. From Orissa, four of us won and from the rest of the country fourteen were elected. So we were eighteen in the Lok Sabha and were the second largest party after the Communist Party who were twenty-nine. As all the Swatantra stalwarts, such as Professor N G Ranga and M R Masani lost the election, the mantle of leadership of the Swatantra Party in Parliament fell on my shoulders. The Swatantra Party and its new ideology was the newest entrant in the political arena of this country and my main task was to sell this new political philosophy in the country by my performance in the Lok Sabha, and at the same time, to meet the challenge of all other parties who had a leftist programme.

It was a tough job, and we had to work in the teeth of vehement opposition from the pseudo-progressive 'socialist' forces. I do not know how I acquitted myself. In the Parliament, our strength increased to twenty-four with the addition of three members of Parliament belonging to the Akali Dal headed by Master Tara Singh, including Sri Buta Singh, my chief whip. He became the Congress' Home Minister later. The independent fire brand speaker, Sri Yaspal Singh who came from Saharanpur after defeating Sri Ajit Prasad Jain, the former Food Minister of India, also joined us.

As subsequent events unfolded, it will not be wrong to assert that the period from 1962 to 1967 was the most crucial epoch of India's recent history. This period witnessed the unprovoked, ruthless and massive Chinese aggression on India's northern border, and our unpreparedness to meet the

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challenge.

Relations between India and China deteriorated in January when the Chinese troops advanced several miles beyond their previous positions into Indian Territory in Ladakh. After this gesture of invasion, the Chinese requested for an early solution of the frontier dispute. Nehru wanted the peaceful withdrawal of the Chinese forces from the traditional boundary of India, before any negotiations started. It may be remembered that Nehru never defined or demarcated the Indian boundary in his previous correspondence while recognising Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. He realised that a peaceful neighbour like Tibet without any ambition would not be like expansionist Peoples Republic of China. Asking them to withdraw now from such areas which traditionally form a part of India is like asking for the moon. It showed the complete bankruptcy of Nehru's diplomacy and lack of understanding of reality, when tackling problems with our neighbours, whether China or Pakistan, as far as Kashmir was concerned. The trade agreement between India and China signed in 1955 had already lapsed. Gone were the days of 1956 when the two religious leaders of Tibet, Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama, visited India and the Lok Sabha as dignitaries representing China. Dalai Lama had fled from Tibet and taken refuge in India.

On 8 September 1962, Chinese forces crossed the demarcated MacMohan Line in North East Frontier Agency area of India on the Eastern front. On 12 October, on his visit to Sri Lanka, Pandit Nehru ordered the Indian Army to eject the Chinese from the territory south of MacMohan Line. On 20 October, there was massive Chinese attack on Indian position in NEFA and Ladakh. In Ladakh, many Indian check posts were seized and in the NEFA area, China occupied Tawaan town, with its monastery, defeating the Indian opposition all the way. The Chinese came south up to the foothill, i.e. Bomdilla in Brahmaputra Valley, a

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subdivisional headquarter of the Tezpur district in Assam. Seeing the approaching Chinese forces, a Bengali Collector left his post in Tezpur and absconded with his family members to Shillong. At that time, Prime Minister Nehru called Mr K D Rana, IAS (a relation of mine, who was posted in Delhi) to fly immediately to Tezpur in an aeroplane and take charge as Collector. He was later awarded the title 'Padmashree'.

On 31st October, Sri V K Krishna Menon was removed from the Defence Ministry and the Prime Minister took charge of it. Prime Minister Nehru was not inclined to do away with the services of Sri Krishna Menon, and was even prepared to submit his own resignation before the Congress Parliamentary Party. It was because of the strong opposition in the Parliamentary Party meeting, especially from Sri Mahabir Tyagi, who insisted on accepting the Prime Minister's resignation. Pandit Nehru withdrew his resignation and removed Krishna Menon from the Defence Ministry.

In the meantime, I was leading a delegation of Members of Parliament to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference to be held at Lagos. My task was difficult. I had to canvass support for India from Commonwealth countries on the question of the Chinese aggression. Taking part in the deliberations in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference at Lagos on 7 November 1962, I drew the attention of the House on the serious developments in India's northern border. I pointed out that when empires crumbled, a new imperialism of a more ruthless kind had reared its ugly head in Asia, i.e. Red China, which was becoming a menace to the peace, security, territorial integrity and Independence of neighbouring countries. My passionate appeal to help India, the victim of an unprovoked, premeditated and brutal attack received support from various delegates from Great Britain, Nigeria, Canada, Australia,

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New Zealand, Malaya and other members of the Commonwealth. As there was no Parliament in Pakistan, Pakistan was not represented in the Conference. The delegate from Ghana introduced unnecessary controversy over the supply of arms to India by United Kingdom. At this crucial time of India, I was applauded for my speech and all subsequent speakers expressed their concern for India. My objective was achieved and when I gave a report of the proceedings of the Commonwealth Conference to Prime Minister Nehru, I received a very appreciative letter from him.

The Governor General of Nigeria Receiving P K Deo, MP, the Leader of Indian Parliamentary Delegation at the Commonwealth Parliament Conference at Lagos in 1962

Returning to India, I found that the Chinese had unilaterally declared a ceasefire and had started withdrawing their forces from Bomdilla to their status quo ante positions to the north of the MacMohan Line. I am yet to understand this strategy of an initial offensive and subsequent withdrawal by China. It may be due to the fact that they wanted to prove their military superiority and make India

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eat the humble pie. It could also be that they wanted Chinese demands to be accepted at the negotiating table. Or, it could be due to the logistic problems because of the incoming winter.

When I returned to India, the Chinese debacle had already shaken the confidence of the people on the Government of India. There was a debate in the Lok Sabha on 10 December 1962, which I had the privilege to initiate. It was not an occasion for mutual recrimination, but a moment of solidarity so that India could stand as one, and face any aggression. This debate roused the nation from its slumber and the government from its complacency to create a new awareness.

A solemn resolution was passed in the Lok Sabha. All of us stood and pledged to free the sacred soil of our motherland from aggression. This pledge was yet to be redeemed when a state of emergency was clamped down in the country, all fundamental rights guaranteed in the Constitution were abrogated, and the process of law short circuited. All this persists today.

I am yet to understand why Pandit Nehru selected me as the leader of the Opposition, to lead a parliamentary delegation at this critical juncture when the Leader's duty was to mobilise opinion in favour of India and paint the Chinese as the aggressor. It will not be out of place to mention that on 13 August 1962, while moving my Substitute Motion on India-China border situation and the foreign policy of the Government of India, I stressed that, as we have learnt from the pages of history, a weak-kneed and vacillating policy of appeasement like that of Chamberlain's peace talk in Munich, does not pay. At that time, I criticised the Government of India for having neglected the pacific region, our neglect being illustrated from the beginning by our non-attendance at the Peace Conference of San Francisco where a Peace Treaty was signed with Japan by

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forty-nine nations. While replying, the Prime Minister stated that this was far from the truth and said that I was speaking through my hat, my reasoning having run riot. I immediately brought a Privilege Motion against the Prime Minister for having misguided the House and the country by making a false statement. On 22 August 1962, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru came in very dignified and apologised for having given a wrong statement. He expressed his sorrow by stating, 'I made a statement which I found subsequently to be incorrect and I apologise to you, to the House and to the Honourable Member.' I immediately stood up and expressed my gratitude to the Prime Minister for having corrected his earlier statement. This spoke of his greatness. Immediately, the Prime Minister shot back saying 'here was a gallant Maharaja.' Since then, my personal rapport with the Prime Minister grew and I often visited him in his house. This could be the reason for his growing confidence in me, and his selecting me as the leader of the parliamentary delegation to the Commonwealth Conference at Lagos.

The Third Lok Sabha was eventful in the sense that, I, being the only member in the Swatantra group to have previous parliamentary experience, had to train and coach the other members of the group in the shuttle of parliamentary practices. We had very promising members with Maharani Gayatri Devi of Jaipur who was kind enough to mention my name in her book *The Princess Remembers,* Sardar Buta Singh, my chief whip, who later became the Home Minister of Government of India under Rajiv Gandhi, Rao Sri Krishna Pal Singh of Awagarh, UP, Sardar Kapur Singh, a retired ICS and Dr Basanta Narayan Singh of Ramgarh, Bihar. Besides getting usual directions from Sri C Rajagopalachari, I had a very efficient office secretary in Sri A P Jain, now settled in Toronto, Canada and is a representative of the newspaper *India Abroad.*

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All Parliament Members, being led by their respective leaders, participated in the unique Republic Day Procession in 1963 and pledged to redeem by the unanimous resolution passed in the House to free every inch of motherland

by ousting an intruder. (Enlarged photograph of the front two rows on the next page.)

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1ST Row (From Right to Left) : Sri Jagjivan Ram, Sri Morarji Desai, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Hukum Singh, Sri Y B Chavan, Sri Satya Narain Sinha
2ND Row (From Right to Left) : Sri S Murthy Rao, Dr Sushila Nair, Sri Gulzari Lal Nanda, Sri P K Deo (with turban), Sri A K Gopalan, Sri S N Dwivedi, Sri A B Vajpayee, Sri N Kanoongo, Sri Lal Bahadui Shastri

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After the Chinese debacle, the Government became very unpopular. The results of the three p by-elections to the Lok Sabha amply proved this Masani and Sri J B Kripalani who lost in 196 Elections got elected by a huge margin from R Amroha respectively. For the first time, Dr Ram Lohia entered the Lok Sabha by being elec Farukkabad. The entrance of these three stalwa opposition benches injected new life to the L debates.

The first tenure of the Chief Ministership c Pattanaik was controversial. On 6 September Orissa Legislative Assembly passed the Tikar Survey bill under the Chief Ministership of Pattanaik. On 5 January 1964, in the presence of Mitra, the Chief Minister and Sri Biju Pattanaik Chairman of the State Planning Board, Pandit Nehru laid the foundation stone for the Tikarpar Natabar Pradhan, the then President of the district Congress Committee gave a vote of th whole function was conducted stealthily as no allowed to assemble at the function. Only the g officials and security men were present. Those l who went there to protest were all arrested o That day was observed all over Western Orissa Day'. The project envisaged the submersion c acres of land on both sides of the Mahanadi ri were the most fertile areas in Dhenkanal, Pulbani and Bolangir districts and included valua forests. At the same time, it would displace 40,0 1,200 villages, mostly with high density of popu towns like Athmallick, Boudh, Sonepur and M would be submerged. Though adverse opinion project was expressed by Sri Tirumala Ayyanger Engineer of Hirakud Project, Sri S N Bhan

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After the Chinese debacle, the Government of India became very unpopular. The results of the three prestigious by-elections to the Lok Sabha amply proved this. Sri M R Masani and Sri J B Kripalani who lost in 1963 General Elections got elected by a huge margin from Rajkot and Amroha respectively. For the first time, Dr Ram Manohar Lohia entered the Lok Sabha by being elected from Farukkabad. The entrance of these three stalwarts to the opposition benches injected new life to the Lok Sabha debates.

The first tenure of the Chief Ministership of Sri Biju Pattanaik was controversial. On 6 September 1961, the Orissa Legislative Assembly passed the Tikarpara Dam Survey bill under the Chief Ministership of Sri Biju Pattanaik. On 5 January 1964, in the presence of Sri Biren Mitra, the Chief Minister and Sri Biju Pattanaik, the then Chairman of the State Planning Board, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation stone for the Tikarpara Dam. Sri Natabar Pradhan, the then President of the Phulbani district Congress Committee gave a vote of thanks. The whole function was conducted stealthily as no public was allowed to assemble at the function. Only the government officials and security men were present. Those local people who went there to protest were all arrested on the way. That day was observed all over Western Orissa as 'Dooms Day'. The project envisaged the submersion of 6,42,570 acres of land on both sides of the Mahanadi river. These were the most fertile areas in Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Pulbani and Bolangir districts and included valuable tropical forests. At the same time, it would displace 40,000 families. 1,200 villages, mostly with high density of population, and towns like Athmallick, Boudh, Sonepur and Monomunda would be submerged. Though adverse opinion against the project was expressed by Sri Tirumala Ayyanger, the Chief Engineer of Hirakud Project, Sri S N Bhanj Deo and

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myself, Sri Biju Pattanaik took the project as a prestige issue and tried to bulldoze all opposition. From the very beginning, I was against the Tikarpara project and wrote a book about it. *The Decade of Doom* is a reply to the Government Publicity Department's *The Decade of Destiny*.

After the foundation stone ceremony at Tikarpara, Pandit Nehru went back to attend the A.I.C.C. Session at Bhubaneswar where Sri Kamaraj Nadar presided. On 6 January 1964, Pandit Nehru had a stroke on the main dais and was removed in a stretcher to the local hospital and then to Delhi. After treatment, he improved considerably and insisted on attending the Parliament every day in spite of his physical disability. He needed to hold the shoulder of an attendant and with difficulty he used to drag his left foot while walking. In spite of this handicap, Pandit Nehru was most cheerful with his colleagues and my last photograph with him was as part of the MPs Cricket Team on the lawns of the Parliament.

In spite of his failing health, Pandit Nehru insisted on passing the nineteenth amendment of the Indian Constitution. This amendment was expropriatory and notorious in the sense that it completed forceful occupation of all personal lands with nominal compensation.

On 8 April, Sheikh Abdullah, former Prime Minister of Kashmir, who had been in detention for more than ten years, was released. He had talks with Pandit Nehru in Delhi and with the President Field Marshal Ayub Khan of Pakistan at Rawalpindi.

The Seventeenth Constitution Amendment Bill expropriating agricultural lands was defeated in the last session of the Lok Sabha because of the absence of nearly 114 Lok Sabha members of the Congress Ruling Party. This was a big shock to the ailing Pandit Nehru. After the crucial budget session was adjourned *sine die* on 10 May 1964, it was again called on 27 May. This Constitution Amendment

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Bill was now numbered as the Nineteenth Constitution Amendment Bill. That is why, Sri Satyanarayana Sinha, the Cabinet Minister for Parliamentary Affairs stated on the last day of the budget session naming it as the Nineteenth Constitution Amendment Bill which is most crucial

On 27 May, when the House assembled at 11 a.m., the then Home Minister, Sri G L Nanda announced that the Prime Minister had suddenly fallen ill at 6.20 a.m. that morning and his condition was causing anxiety. When, after the Question Hour this Nineteenth Constitution Amendment Bill was moved by the Law Minister, Sri A K Sen, I immediately stood up and brought up a point of order. There was a great hullabaloo. But Sri Yaspal Singh, an associated Swatantra member and Sri N G Ranga supported me. There was a division and even though many members from the Congress bench supported us, we lost and the bill was introduced. Immediately after lunch, when the Lok Sabha assembled, Minister of Steel and Mines, Sri C Subramanian announced the grave news that the Prime Minister was no more.

28 May was fixed for the funeral procession and cremation of Pandit Nehru. On 29 May, Prime Minister Sri G L Nanda, who officiated till a new Prime Minister was elected by the Ruling Party, made obituary references, along with the other leaders, to the late Jawaharlal Nehru. The House was adjourned after the condolence resolution was passed and it was to meet on 1 June. On 1 June, after the Question Hour, the Speaker called the Law Minister, Sri A K Sen to proceed with the consideration of the Bill. I immediately stood up and brought a point of order that the Bill of such far reaching consequences should not be discussed till such time a permanent government was in place and a successor to the Prime Minister was duly elected by the party in power. Sri J B Kripalani supported me. But the Speaker ruled this out and the Bill was

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considered. Mr Masani was our main speaker.

On 17 April, this Constitution Amendment Bill was discussed in the Lok Sabha and was rejected because a large number of Congress Party Members dragged their feet and absented themselves in spite of a three-line whip. The Congress Party could muster only 256 members even though they had a strength of 370 when the Bill fell through. *The Hindu* paper of 30 April said, 'Millions of honest farmers all over the country will rejoice over the fact that temporarily, at any rate, this obnoxious measure has been snuffed out.' Mr Masani spoke on behalf of the Swatantra Party forcefully against the bill, describing it as expropriatory for no adequate compensations was provided for the ceiling surplus land. He pointed out how Land Reforms in Japan and in Nationalist China (Taiwan) had made tremendous progress even though the individual land ceiling was two acres in Japan and seven acres in Taiwan. In these two countries, the yield per acre was the highest in the world and the people who had been paid compensation at the market rate have re-ploughed that money in industrialisation or other means of production. Japan is today the highest industrialised country in the world. And Taiwan is no less. Mr Masani's speech was the best speech I have ever heard in the Lok Sabha. He quoted Dr Ambedkar, the founding father of the Constitution while piloting the Constitution bill. 'I submit there is no ground for any fear of any such thing happening and I believe that there is also no justification for any kind of propaganda that may be carried on by interested parties, that this Bill proposes to give power to government to expropriate everybody including the ryotwari tenants.'

Credit for the unanimous election of Shastri as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party was given to Sri Kamraj, the then Congress President. Shastriji pledged himself to continue Nehru's policies. These were

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democratic socialism at home and nonalignment abroad. He retained about all members of the Nehru Cabinet, with the addition of Smt Indira Gandhi, Nehru's daughter as the Minister for Information and Broadcasting. Though a Cabinet Minister, she used to develop cold feet in debates. I remember once while I was presiding as Chairman of the House, I adjourned the House five minutes before 1700 hours as she was not ready with a reply. Shastriji became extremely popular and his government was firmly established despite the challenges of rising prices, food scarcity and the Chinese nuclear explosion. Sri Pratap Singh Kairon was asked to resign following an inquiry by Sri S R Das, former Chief Justice of Supreme Court, on the charges of misuse of power. In September, Buxi Gulam Mohammed was arrested for corruption charges. Sri N Sanjeeva Reddy resigned as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh after a similar charge was proved against him in a judgement of the Supreme Court.

In Orissa, R N Singh Deo was the Leader of the Opposition, Sri Biren Mitra was the Chief Minister and Sri Biju Pattanaik was the Chairman of the State Planning Board. On 24 July 1964, the Leader of the Opposition along with opposition members of Parliament and MLAs submitted a memorandum to Dr S Radhakrishnan, the then President of India, making specific charges of corruption, misdeeds, favouritism, exploitation and misuse of powers against the Chief Minister, Sri Biren Mitra, Sri Biju Pattanaik, former Chief Minister and Chairman, State Planning Board, Sri N M Routray, Minister of Home and Supplies and others, demanding a Commission of Enquiry under Commission of Enquiry Act, 1952 and asking the State Ministry to vacate. This matter was referred to the CBI on 21 February 1965. To my great surprise, I found one envelope containing the preliminary report of the CBI delivered at my residence in 29, Ferozeshah Road.

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On 22 February, while intervening in the Prime Minister's statement, I quoted some portions of the findings of the CBI report. When Speaker Sardar Hukam Singh enquired, 'Where are they from?' I answered, 'from the CBI report.' There was an uproar from the treasury benches, questioning my right to quote from a confidential document which was not expected to be with me. However, the Speaker reserved his ruling for the 26th of February 1965. The historic ruling was that 'a Member of the Parliament has a right to quote from such a document treated by Government as secret or confidential, in case he authenticates that the document is genuine and the Member cannot be compelled to disclose the source from which such documents have been obtained.' This historic ruling was given after good deal of thought and having examined previous decisions of the House, the House of Commons in United Kingdom and other Parliaments. This decision still stands and holds good even today.

I was absent from the Lok Sabha on the 26, as I was on a tour to Orissa. On my return, I placed the CBI report on the table of the Lok Sabha on 19 April, 1965, after authenticating it. Prime Minister Shastri appointed a Cabinet Sub-Committee headed by Sri M C Chagla. Several meetings took place to consider in detail the allegations against the former and present Chief Ministers of Orissa in regard to which the CBI were held. In para 4 of the report submitted to the government, it was stated, 'The Sub-Committee held Sri Pattanaik no less responsible for the impropriety involved in these purchases.' In para 5, it was pointed out that 90.63 acres of government land continues to be in illegal possession of Sri Pattanaik and his family. The Sub-Committee also stated, 'as the beneficiary was a concern in which Sri Pattanaik's family was interested, it was also altogether improper. The actual order of revision was passed by the Revenue Department of the

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State Government with the approval of Sri Pattanaik himself as Finance Minister and he must, therefore, bear responsibility for this impropriety.'

The Cabinet Sub-Committee concluded that, 'however the Sub-Committee felt in the course of its examination of the material, that the manner in which Sri Pattanaik and Sri Mitra directly or otherwise, conducted government transactions in which the interests of private concerns were also involved, owned or controlled by them or by their relations, was definitely not in keeping with the normal standards of public conduct. The Sub-Committee desires to record their profound concern at the picture emerging as a whole from the series of such individual transactions in many fields of activity of the State Government, of improper use of authority by leaders of the government.'

After this stricture by the Central Cabinet, Sri Biren Mitra and Sri Biju Pattanaik had to resign and Sri Sadasiv Tripathy became the Chief Minister of Orissa.

The Communist Party of India underwent a major split into pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese political formation known as CPI and the pro-Chinese left wing known as CPI(M). After the Communist split, the Swatantra Party in Parliament became the main opposition group and its leader, Sri N G Ranga who got re-elected from Tirupati, occupied the seat of the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. In the Rajya Sabha, we had the largest group in the opposition. So, our leader, Sri Dahya Bai Patel, the son of late Sardar Patel, functioned for all purposes as the leader of opposition. This period witnessed food shortages throughout the country, which led to an agreement with the United States for supply of more grains. Intensive cultivation schemes were taken up in right earnest. There was an outbreak of continuous firing between Indian and Pakistan forces across the border in Jammu. Lal Bahadur Shastri gave a new slogan to the country 'Jai Jawan, Jai

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Kisan'. The Swatantra Party in Parliament submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister against various malpractices by the then Finance Minister, Sri T T Krishnamachary, who ultimately resigned from the ministry.

There was constant infiltration of the Pakistani forces into the Indian side. This led to armed clashes between Indian and Pakistani forces. Shastriji did not attend the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference in London in July, due to ill health. He was represented by Smt Indira Gandhi who was the Minister for Information and Broadcasting in his Ministry. Shastriji, however, attended the nonaligned conference at Cairo in October, his first visit abroad. Lal Bahadur Shastri's father was an ordinary school teacher. Lal Bahadur Shastri lost his father when he was eighteen months old. He was brought up by his uncle. He had a humble beginning and had only one set of clothes. He used to walk eight miles to his school and back every day. He was a man of humility and integrity, but he was very firm in his administration, as subsequent events unfolded. At that time, Field Marshal Ayub Khan became the President of Pakistan after abrogating the Constitution and dissolving the Parliament. Marshal Law was in force in Pakistan. On 6 February 1965 Pakistan invaded the Rann of Kutch. General Chaudhury was the Army Chief of India. Shastriji did not lose his head at the invasion of Kutch because the area was mostly marshy land inundated by tidal water from the sea and was sparsely populated. It created logistic difficulties for the Pakistani troops, though these were, as was afterwards discovered diversionary tactics for the entrenched Indian Army on the Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan border.

On 6 September 1965, there was full-fledged Pakistani aggression along the Kashmir and Punjab border. The entire nation stood as one behind Shastriji. For the first

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time, Shastriji created one *Raksha Kosh* and called for voluntary contributions in shape of cash or gold. Contributions came voluntarily in large numbers and people contributed the gold bonds. We, the rulers of former Indian States, voluntarily contributed ten per cent of our income. Though the battle at the Kashmir border had many causalities on both sides, the Indian Army at Punjab crossed the international border and the Ichhogil Canal especially dug by F M Ayub Khan to stop the movement of Indian tanks and armed carriers into Pakistan border. The people of Punjab wholeheartedly supported the movement of the Indian Army. The Indian Army reached as far as Moghulpura on the outskirts of the Lahore city, and could have any day taken over the capital of Punjab in Pakistan. At that time President Kosygin of USSR, who all along supported India in the Security Council, at times, even using his veto power, intervened. On 8 September 1965 both Shastriji and F M Ayub Khan were requested to be his guests at Tashkent to discuss the cessation of hostilities according to the Security Council Resolution. The day Shastriji went, we unanimously gave our support to his mission and saw him off at the airport. At Tashkent, India's Prime Minister and the Pakistani President signed an agreement for ceasefire and the withdrawal of their respective troops into their original stations as on 10 January 1966. To our great surprise, though we breathed a sigh of relief, the country was not prepared to accept the Tashkent declaration. Indian troops were for a crushing defeat of Pakistan. The same night, Shastriji died under mysterious circumstances and in the morning, the entire country was shocked to lose its most popular Prime Minister. It was learnt that at the same night, before going to bed, Shastriji had phoned his home, talked with his wife to find out the reaction in the country and informed her that he was quite well. When we saw him off a couple of days earlier, he was

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healthy, smiling and waving to all of us at the airport.

That was the last time we saw Shastriji. After his death on 19 January 1966, for the second time Sri Gulzari Lal Nanda officiated as the Prime Minister of India, till a leader was elected by the Congress Parliamentary Party.

In 1965, I took the opportunity of making a trip around the world. In 1953, my wife and I had seen Germany in complete shambles. In Cologne and Frankfurt and other cities, we did not see a single tall building, except the Cologne Cathedral and some churches, which had survived in spite of heavy bombardments by the allied forces. After twelve years what I saw of West Germany left me completely amazed at their hard labour, reconstruction of tall multi-storied buildings, factories and booming economy. But East Germany, which was a satellite country of USSR, had a communist government, and its President Honecker was as ruthless and cruel as Stalin. As there was migration from East to West Germany, he built a concrete wall, which divided East and West Berlin. There was barbed wire all along the border. Many youths in search of employment tried to cross over this artificial barrier but were ruthlessly killed.

I particularly wanted to visit Berlin to see the difference between these two systems of economy, i.e. free trade and a regimented economy, flourishing side by side. West Berlin was a flourishing city with booming trade and commerce, with plenty of latest cars, and the availability of various consumer items. At the Berlin Wall, there was only one point of entry to go to East Berlin. We had to return by the evening. The entry point was known as 'check point Charlie', through which foreigners with valid passports could go in for a day. We had our guide, a Bolivian student of the American University and he took me and my friend Sri Y N Singh Deo, MP of Sundergarh, as we had valid passports. Though our car was thoroughly checked, we had

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no difficulty and spent the whole day in East Berlin, which wore a deserted look. There were no cars in the streets. All the able-bodied men and women had gone to work in the factories in tramcars. There was hardly any shop where we could buy consumer items. The bombarded buildings had not been repaired. We had our food in a government managed hotel. I must say that food in East Berlin was much cheaper than in the West. We had a sumptuous lunch with exotic dishes like crab from Kamchatka Peninsula in the Pacific and fish from Lake Baikal in Siberia and caviar from Baku on the Caspian Sea.

After visiting all the countries in Western Europe, we spent a week in London. At Oxford, I met a bright Indian student, M S Ahluwalia who was keen to know more of Swatantra economy. He is the present Finance Secretary and is one of the architects of liberalism in our country. Then from London, we flew to Montreal in Canada, USA, Hawai Islands, Japan, Hongkong Islands and back to India. The Lok Sabha sponsored our tour, with prior intimation sent to the various Indian Missions abroad. We had no difficulty in United Kingdom where we were looked after by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association of which I am a life member.

In 1965, there was distress famine in certain parts of the country due to the failure of monsoon. Central India including Madhya Pradesh was very badly hit and many people died due to malnutrition and epidemic. It affected the adjoining areas of Orissa, particularly the Nawapara Subdivision of Kalahandi district, Kantabanji, Bongomunda, and Harisankar Road Blocks in Bolangir district and the Padampur Subdivision of Sambalpur district. The situation was really bad. I had previously mentioned that Sri S K Patil, the Central Food Minister, had made arrangements with the assistance of USA to get a large quantity of wheat under agreement PL 480. Several community feeding

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centres and food for work were started and Shastriji fought this challenging situation with determination. He gave all importance to agriculturists to tighten their belts and work hard for more production in the Rabi season. This short period of nineteen months and two days of Shastriji's Prime Ministership was the glorious chapter of India's post-Independence history. All Indians, irrespective of party persuasions supported him as 'The man'.

P K Deo, MP, Leads a Procession Demanding a New Steel Plant in Orissa

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Chapter IX

THE SPLIT IN THE CONGRESS PARTY AND THE BASTAR TRAGEDY

In the election of the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party, unlike in 1964, there was a contest between Smt Indira Gandhi and Sri Morarji Desai. The Congress President, Sri Kamraj Nadar supported Smt Gandhi and she was elected on 18 January as the leader, and took oath as Prime Minister of India on 24 January, 1966. Though Mr Morarji Desai was defeated in the election of leaders in the Congress Parliamentary Party, he was inducted in Smt Indira Gandhi's Cabinet as deputy Prime Minister. Smt Gandhi had to face various challenges from inside and outside the party. Due to the failure of monsoon in 1965, India was facing serious famine conditions in some parts and the economy was sagging. The PL 480 programme, under which USA gave massive food subsidy, helped to tide over the famine condition. To improve the economy of this country, the Prime Minister did the most unwise thing. She devalued the rupee in part with the hard currency on 6 June 1966.

In Madhya Pradesh, Sri D P Mishra was the Chief Minister. It was a predominantly Congress area. But the Congress could not penetrate into the Bastar state because of the immense popularity of Maharaja Pravir Chandra Bhanj Deo of Kakatiya who succeeded his mother in his childhood and was a branch of the famous Kakatiya family of Warangal. The presiding deity of Bastar was Danteswari Mai. After the death of his mother, his father, Prafulla Chandra Bhanj Deo of the Mayurbhanj family was not allowed by the British to enter

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Bastar state, since, during his postgraduate studies in Oxford University he had been the founder-member of the 'Indian League' which was more or less a branch of the Indian National Congress and had preached freedom of India in UK. Sri V K Krishna Menon, his contemporary in UK, had been given shelter and financial help by him when he was in trouble. After the war, Prafulla Chandra Bhanj Deo came to India and after Independence, joined the Ganatantra Parishad. He was also an MP in the Rajya Sabha for two terms. At the time when India's Independence was about to come, Pravir, who had not attained the age of twenty-one years was recognised, as a special case, as the ruler of Bastar by the British, who were about to leave. An experienced Dewan, Thakur Raghuraj Singh, was appointed to assist the ruler in the administration. Raghuraj Singh was a member of the Constituent Assembly also. Pravir acceded Bastar to India and signed the Merger Agreement on 15 December 1947; as a result, Bastar was amalgamated into Madhya Pradesh.

But the stepmotherly and colonial attitude of the MP Government towards Bastar, the exploitation of the natural resources like forest and mineral wealth by the *thekedars* without improving the conditions of the local people enraged Pravir. Bastar, which is more than 15,000 sq. miles and bigger than the Kerala state, is inhabited by *adivasis*. Logs from its sal and teak forests are floated down the Godavari to Rajamundry to meet the forest requirement of Andhra Pradesh. They are also used in Madhya Pradesh. Its iron ore deposits in Bailadila plateau are probably the largest iron ore deposits in the world. The present Visakhapatnam Steel Plant and iron ore export to foreign countries through Visakhapatnam port, all use iron from Bailadila. So, there used to be occasional uprising among the *adivasis* to assert their rights over the forest produce, against infringement of their traditional forest rights, and the oppression of corrupt officials. Pravir used to take up their case and often threw open his whole palace as a *Dharamsala*. *Adivasis*

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from different parts would occupy any room and cook their rice which they brought along with them and stay for days in Jagadalpur, the district headquarter. He was literally worshipped as God and was the Chief Priest of Danteswari Mai. On *Dasahara* day, the *adivasis* pulled the *Rath*, (the Chariot) where he used to sit. Because of his commanding personality and respect of the local people, the Congress did not win a single seat to the Madhya Pradesh Assembly in all the elections. He became an eyesore for Sri D P Mishra, the then Chief Minister and though he was getting a limited amount of privy purse after merging his state in India, this amount was put under Court of Wards. When he wanted to marry, the Court of Wards sanctioned a paltry sum. Whatever he used to get from the Court of Wards for his personal expenses, he used to throw away the currency notes from the top of the palace to those who were in the streets.

These circumstances made him a psychological case. He appealed to local *adivasis* to contribute monthly whatever they could for his marriage and they collected quite a lot of money. He got married in a Kshyatriya family of Patan in Rajasthan. In 1966, matters came to a peak and the Madhya Pradesh Government passed an Act ordering compulsory procurement of fifty per cent of all the rice produced by the farmers during this drought year of 1966. Hunger deaths occurred in large numbers. As a protest, Pravir sat in the temple for a twenty-four hour hunger strike against the police for enforcing rice procurement with attendant atrocities. *Adivasis,* with their usual bows and arrows, came in large numbers and stayed in the palace, which was their *Dharamsala*.

The front portion of his palace had been rented out to the government and was used as the Collector's office, the District Judge's office, the District Police office, etc. On 25 March 1966, the Reserve Police and some platoons of Madhya Pradesh Military Police brought from Jabalpur were found to be standing on all the tall buildings and the compound walls

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pointing their rifles towards the palace area where the *adivasis* had assembled. At 10 o'clock, there was firing from all sides and many people were shot dead. The palace compound was full of blood. Then Pravir came out from the palace and shouted at them to put an end to firing and take the wounded to the hospital. When he was standing on the palace verandah, he got a bullet in his right hand and retreated to his bedroom with his injured arm. At 4 p.m., a police force raided the palace and his bedroom, and killed him while he was lying on his bed. The mattress was soaked with blood, and on the walls and on the brass bed, there were several holes and blood marks. In the postmortem report, it was found that there were many holes in his body made by bayonets or daggers.

It was later found that the entire episode was monitored from Bhopal. The Chief Secretary, Mr Noronha, ICS was available by phone in Bhopal and he was giving instructions till he was satisfied that Pravir was dead. It may be remembered that Mr Noronha remained the Administrator of Bastar after the merger and then the Collector, continuously for more than ten years and had misunderstandings with Pravir on various occasions. This incident created an uproar in the Parliament. Anger and indignation was expressed by eminent citizens of the country, irrespective of parties, against this brutal and calculated murder, and an unofficial enquiry committee was formed with Acharya J B Kripalani as its President and Dr M S Aney, MP, as its Vice President and I, as its Secretary. The other members were from various sections of the people and in our first meeting, each one of us voluntarily gave Rs1,000 and had a lakh of rupees collected at the spot.

The Congress, of course, non-co-operated and when Acharya Kripalani got down at Raipur Railway Station, he could not get a taxi or a bus ticket to go to Jagadalpur, a distance of about 200 miles. I sent my car from Bhawanipatna. He went and addressed a large gathering at Jagadalpur. All

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speakers in the meeting and the eyewitnesses, narrated in detail the incident of 25 March, and condemned the government. Later Prof. Ranga and I visited Jagadalpur when we were making a tour of the famine affected area of Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. We visited the actual spot of the killing and addressed a big meeting in front of the palace at Jagadalpur. All this had a tremendous impact all over the country, more so in Madhya Pradesh. The 1967 result corroborated this when the Congress was ousted from power.

This period also saw unprecedented students' unrest all over the country and the government's excessive repressive measures resulted in good deal of resentment. The largest procession to Parliament ever organised in the capital was witnessed in the month of November 1966 in connection with 'Ban Cow Slaughter Movement'. This ended in police firing in the Parliament Street resulting in several deaths. Sri Nanda had to go. This resulted in a complete reshuffle of the cabinet. The gates of the Parliament compound were fixed with iron grills, which still exists.

When the Council of Ministers was in the dock, in the name of the People of India, I charged them with grave dereliction of duty. I pointed out that they persistently followed the wrong economic policies for fifteen years, which had led to inevitable insolvency. They were not able to give two square meals a day to the people, then failed to control the soaring prices of all goods, especially the essential commodities. They created artificial scarcity and famine conditions in the country wherein by their callousness and complacent attitude, hundreds of people had died of starvation and that twenty-five per cent of the land was lying fallow for want of seed and money in spite of the current year's good monsoon, by not being able to check corruption and nepotism, and political patronage in this country. In bringing an end to the rule of law, by clamping down on this country the state of emergency and by encroaching upon the

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fundamental rights of the citizens, they resorted to firing on labourers, students and peaceful demonstrators in order to liquidate their political rivals. Lastly, they neglected agriculture all these years, robbing the peasant of his right over his land.

I pointed out that the Indian Government was the culprit who had brought this nation to irremediable bankruptcy, and proclaimed it in a public confession by devaluing the rupee on 6 June 1966. The government scored four consecutive sixers or over boundaries when they officially recorded that extravagance, insolvency, rising prices and their inability to rule and keep the house in order had crossed their previous boundaries. All along, they never played a straight bat. They played a cross bat, thereby exposing the country's national and economic wickets to grave danger.

I must congratulate Smt Indira Gandhi for coming to Khariar in Nawapara Subdivision, to Sinapalli and other affected areas and personally supervising the feeding camps. I received her at Khariar and had nearly an hour long talk with her where I submitted a memorandum to her about tapping the water resources of the district and to provide irrigation facilities to arid lands.

P K Deo, MP, with PM Indira Gandhi on Her Visit to Khariar in Kalahandi

Nawapara Subdivision was always famine prone, the entire

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subdivision comes under the rain-shed area of the long range of the hill, i.e. Sunabeda plateau or Pati dongar. The Prime Minister approved of my proposal and all those projects have been taken up, one by one. She fully appreciated the Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project and later in 1975 cleared this project. This was when she was the Prime Minister and after the Krishna-Godavari Water Commission, presided by Justice Bachawat, had given their award.

P K Deo as an MP Welcoming Justice Bachawat

As there was constant demand from the opposition parties regarding corruption charges and maladministration, Prime Minister, Smt Gandhi appointed one Administrative Reforms Committee during this period. Sri Morarji Desai headed it. The Deputy Prime Minister and the other two members were Sri H V Kamath, MP, and Sri K Hanumantaiah, MP. In their first report, they suggested the immediate and imperative need of appointing an institution of ombudsman of the Scandinavian type. He would be an extension of the parliamentary system and would enquire into the various complaints, grievances and charges of corruption and maladministration against the higher officers in the executive, including the Prime Minister, brought by the public. The Swadeshi name of this

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institution would be Lok Pal in the Centre and Lok Ayukt in the States. They would have independent staff and would submit an annual report to the legislatures. If there was a prima facie case, then the legislature could take any action, like Commission of Enquiry, etc. Along with their recommendations, they submitted a model bill to be introduced immediately in the Parliament. However, this was never passed. The Lok Pal would have acted as a sword against corrupt and oppressive officials and as a shield for the honest ones.

P K Deo with Ex MP and MLAs Meeting Justice Bachawat at Mukhiguda for Commissioning the Upper Indravati Project

The Project Site

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P K Deo, MP, Planning the Inter Basin Diversion of the Indravati River Water

The Author at the New Indravati Power House

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Chapter X

THE 1967 MIRACLE, AND THE SOCIALIST EXPERIMENT OF THE CONGRESS

The most unexpected results came after 1967 elections in the Lok Sabha. Except in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka and Maharashtra, the Congress lost its majority in most of the states.

In his book, *Muktipathe Sainik, Part II,* Sri Pabitra Mohan Pradhan mentions that in 1965 he had differences with the Chief Ministers, Sri Biju Pattanaik and Sri Biren Mitra for their corruption and he resigned from the Ministry. Then, in 1965 along with Sri Surendranath Pattnaik, Sri Banamali Pattnaik and others, he submitted a memorandum to Sri Kamaraj Nadar, the then Congress President in 1964. The matter was sent to the PCC President, Sri Bijaya Kumar Pani. Sri Biju Pattanaik and his supporters charged him. They forced him to send a telegram to the Congress President mentioning that he made those charges at the instigation of Sri Mahatab, that he expressed his pardon and wanted to withdraw the memorandum. When he resisted and did not sign the draft telegram, Biju Pattanaik's driver and some hired *goondas* rushed to the meeting hall, assaulted him and tore his shirt. He immediately went to Delhi and showed his torn shirt to Sri Jagjivan Ram, Gulzari Lal Nanda and Ramsubhag Singh, who expressed their surprise at the low level to which the Orissa Congress had fallen. On 5 May 1965, this disgruntled element decided to come

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out of the Congress and form the Orissa Jana Congress, with Sri Pabitra Mohan Pradhan as its President. This group joined the Swatantra Party to fight the 1967 election as a joint front, on an agreed programme. In that election, the Congress strength was reduced from eighty-eight to thirty.

The platform of common programme on which the election was fought in Orissa had twenty-one main points. The main features were the following.

(a) The establishment of a clean and good government
(b) The ruthless elimination of corruption, favouritism and nepotism at all levels and setting up of a Commission for Inquiry into charges of corruption by ministers
(c) The setting up of an ombudsman for the eradication of corruption
(d) Freeing the administration from political pressures and ensuring impartiality and fair deal to employees
(e) The elimination of unnecessary controls, permits, licences and quotas
(f) Abolition of land revenue, reduction of tax burden and elimination of harassment in collection of state dues
(g) Creation of proper conditions and freedom for expansion of business and industry and increasing employment opportunities
(h) Special attention for development of SCs/STs and other backward classes and underdeveloped areas
(i) Emphasis on development of agriculture, provision of basic necessities for the people and development of the infrastructure for economic development
(j) Changing of the monopoly system in the Kendu Leaves Trade

In Orissa, Sri R N Singh Deo, of the Swatantra Party became the Chief Minister. The Swatantra Party and the dissident group of the Congress (Jana Congress under the

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leadership of Sri H K Mahatab and Pabitra Mohan Pradhan) had jointly fought the election and completely routed the Congress whose President was Sri Biju Pattanaik. The latter lost his Assembly seat from Patkura, to one Chakradhar Satpathy (PSP). In Madras, Mr Annadurai became the Chief Minister. Though there was an election understanding with the Swatantra Party, the election was conducted by Sri C Rajagopalachari. The Swatantra Party was more interested in Central politics and the regional party of DMK wanted to capture power in Tamil Nadu. It may be interesting to note that Sri C Rajagopalachari went to Salem Lok Sabha constituency to canvass for Sri Rajaram, who fought on DMK ticket from Salem, contesting Rajaji's son C R Narasimhan. In Kerala, the CPI(M) formed the Government along with other leftist parties. In West Bengal, Sri Ajay Mukherjee, a dissident Congress leader organised a regional party called the Bangla Congress and formed a coalition ministry with the help of other leftist parties. In Rajasthan the Swatantra Party did well. Sri Laxman Singh of Dungerpur was the Leader of the Opposition and staked his claim to form the Rajasthan Government because some independents had joined the Swatantra Assembly Party. But, the then Governor, who always held his office at the pleasure of the President acted on the advice of the Home Ministry, and called Sri Mohanlal Sukhadia, the Congress leader to form the government. This was just a day before the Assembly was to meet and test the strength of the government in the Assembly.

President's rule was imposed. The people of Rajasthan vehemently opposed the governor's move, denying the Assembly to prove the strength of the Congress and the Swatantra Parties. There was agitation and firing, resulting in the killing of several persons. The Swatantra Party MLAs, under the leadership of Sri Laxman Singh, came to the

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Rashtrapati Bhawan and physically proved their majority in the House. Even this was of no avail. During the President's rule, all sorts of manipulation and manoeuvring began and independent MLAs were bought over by Mohanlal Sukhadia. He was again appointed Chief Minister by the Governor. The role of the governors even today is most dubious. They do not follow any democratic practices or conventions and have different standards for different occasions as dictated by the Home Ministry.

In Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, after a short tenure of Congress rule, there were large defections from the Congress benches and SVD Governments were formed. Mahamaya Prasad Singh was the Chief Minister in Bihar, Sri Govinda Narayan Singh in Madhya Pradesh, and Sri Charan Singh in Uttar Pradesh. In Punjab, the Akalis came to power. Even today, we have Article 356 in the Indian Constitution. Governors like Romesh Bhandari in Uttar Pradesh recommended thrice to impose President's Rule. I am yet to see a Rashtrapathi like Sri K R Narayan who intervened and returned the Cabinet's approval under Article 356 of the Constitution. Ultimately, the Cabinet had to alter its stand.

In the Lok Sabha, the Swatantra Party proved its strength. We were the second largest party in the Sabha, when our leader, Professor N G Ranga, who lost in Tirupati, was re-elected from Srikakulam after Ms Gouta Lachhanna vacated the seat. He defeated his formidable Congress rival, Boddepalli Rajagopala Rao, a Kalinga by caste, which dominates the entire constituency. I went for election campaigning and mobilised the maximum number of Oriya votes in Ichhapuram, Sompeta, and Tekkali areas. After Ranga came, our strength in the House was forty-nine, short of one member to enable Professor Ranga to be officially declared as the Leader of Opposition.

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Ministers of Orissa Government (Swatantra Party) and Some Members of the Swatantra Party's National Executive

STANDING LEFT TO RIGHT: H P Mahapatra, Law Minister, D N Naik, Works Minister, R N Singh Deo, Chief Minister, M P Misra, Health Minister, H H Patel, Industry Minister, T Sadashivam, Member of National Executive, N G Ranga, MP, Leader of Swatantra Parliamentary Party in Lok Sabha, Dhayabhai Patel, MP, Leader of Swatantra Parliamentary Party in Rajya Sabha

SITTING LEFT TO RIGHT: C Rajagopalachari, the first Bharatratna, last Governor General of India and founder of Swatantra Party, G Pradhan, Forest and Environment Minister, M R Masani, MP, Secretary General of Swatantra Party, N Dandekar, ICS (Rtd.), MP, Secretary Swatantra Party

SITTING: K Majhi, Minister for Tribal and Rural Affairs, P K Deo, MP, first Swatantra Parliamentary Party Leader in the Lok Sabha

On 9 May 1967, Dr Zakir Hussein was elected President of India. He could not complete even two years and died of heart attack. Sri V V Giri, the Vice President was sworn in as acting President on 12 July. In the meantime, Sri S

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Nijalingappa had been elected as the President of Congress Party. Their Parliamentary Board meeting in Bangalore, of which the Prime Minister was a member, nominated Sri N Sanjeeva Reddy for the Presidentship of India on 12 July. On 13 July, the acting President, Sri V V Giri, announced his candidature for the Presidentship. On 16 July, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took over the Finance portfolio from Sri Morarji Desai, due to a difference of opinion on Nationalisation of Scheduled Banks. Morarji Desai resigned from the ministry. On 19 July, fourteen top Scheduled Banks were nationalised by the Government of India. The acting President, Sri V V Giri, resigned as Vice President as he filed his nomination for the Presidentship, at the instigation of the Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi. On 21 July, N Sanjeeva Reddy (Congress), Sri V V Giri (Independent) and Sri Chintaman Rao Deshmukh (Swatantra) filed nomination papers for the Presidentship of India.

Though the nomination paper of Sri N Sanjeeva Reddy was proposed by the Prime Minister, Smt Indira Gandhi, she took a completely different stand later on. She called all the voters, i.e. all MPs and the MLAs to cast their votes according to their conscience. This meant that even the Congress voters were at liberty to deny the three-line whip of the Congress Party and vote against the party nominee. On 20 August, I was at Hyderabad in the Swatantra Party office along with Sri G Lachhanna, the State Swatantra President. To our great surprise, we learnt from the radio announcement that Sri V V Giri was elected President of India with a narrow margin. We saw Prime Minister Indira Gandhi garlanding Sri Giri at his residence and being received by Mrs Giri as their darling daughter on television. We were surprised at this volte-face, and the great betrayal by Smt Gandhi for having canvassed against the candidate whose name was proposed by her. This caused a split of the

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Congress Party. On 1 of December, Sri Jagjivan Ram was chosen by the dissent group as the President of the Congress (R). (Here 'R' means the Ruling Congress) and the existing Congress organisation was known as Congress (O). Smt Gandhi was expelled from the Congress Party for indiscipline. After the split, a larger chunk of the Congress in Parliament came out from the Treasury Benches and sat on the Opposition Benches. Their leader, Dr Ramsubhag Singh, was recognised as the official leader of the Opposition. The Indira Gandhi Government Congress (R) was in minority, but it continued till 1971 with the support of the two communist parties, i.e. CPI and CPI (M), DMK and some socialist members in the Lok Sabha. The Congress (O), Swatantra Party, Jana Sangha and Sanjukta Socialist Party acted jointly in the opposition.

In this eventful four years of the Fourth Lok Sabha, the Swatantra Party as the main opposition played its role fairly well. In the first session of the Lok Sabha, I introduced a non-official 'The Lok Pal Bill 1965', a carbon copy of the bill recommended by the Administrative Reforms Commission, as a priority, and advised the government to make it a law at their earliest opportunity. As the government was silent, I moved this non-official bill and the Committee on the Private Members Bill classified this bill in Category-A. In the ballot my bill also got priority. The then Home Minister, Mr Y B Chavan was least keen to get the bill passed. But, as it was recommended by the Administrative Reforms Committee, he did not oppose it in the introductory stage. As the bill envisaged financial commitment by the government, the President's prior recommendation to the Lok Sabha was necessary before the consideration stage.

After fifteen days, when the bill came for consideration, the Treasury Benches pointed out that in the absence of the President's recommendation, the bill could not be

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considered. Just before my bill was taken up by the House, I circumvented the procedure laid down in the Constitution by moving a Substitute Motion 'that this bill providing for appointment and function of an authority named Lok Pal for investigation of administrative acts in certain cases and for matters connected therewith, be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the first day of the next session.' Nobody could raise any objection and I fully utilised this opportunity for attacking the government for having put this important bill in cold storage. I pointed out that the intention of the government seemed to give shelter to corrupt men, to remain callous to the cancerous growth of corruption, the helplessness of citizens subjected to improper and unjust acts, for which they had no recourse to. The government was completely taken aback by this clever manoeuvre and the Treasury Benches were mostly empty. I had already informed all the opposition parties that I would press for a division. Most of them were present in the Central Hall. The Home Minister opposed my motion for circulation while accepting the very principle of my bill. That was meaningless. I pressed for division and all the opposition members rushed to the House and they voted for my bill. For the first time in Parliament's history, the government was defeated in a Substantive Motion. My bill was circulated for public opinion, and was published in all the state gazettes and papers. I got unanimous support from all states and from all corners of India, including eminent jurists like retired High Court Judges, eminent administrators such as K Santhanam, who headed the anti-corruption committee during Pandit Nehru's time. All these opinions were published in the form of a booklet, which has been preserved in the Parliament Library. Had it been in our statute book, all these maladies of kickbacks, scams or bribes could have been prevented without wasting Parliament's time. Today, a former Prime Minister and a

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Chief Minister are in the dock. There is no investigating agency. The CBI, a police organisation is supposed to investigate. However, its head is changed according to the whim of the Prime Minister who brings his own man from his state, and thus, his investigations are ineffective.

By 1968, the project report of the Upper Indravati Multipurpose Project had already been published by the Orissa Government. Pointing out the inevitable, the periodical famines in the Kalahandi district needed to be included in the plan. Though there was a consensus among all members to my proposal, it was bypassed by the Centre because the State Government did not show the amount of interest expected in this project since it would ultimately benefit Kalahandi district only.

During this dilly-dallying, the states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh protested, as the Indravati was a tributary of the Godavari. Being riparian states, they objected to the storing of Indravati water and diverting them to the Mahanadi basin. So, the Krishna-Godavari Water Commission was appointed under Justice Bachawat to give its decision on the shares of water to the respective states. Sri R N Singh Deo, Chief Minister, Orissa, appointed Dr L M Singhvi, Senior Advocate of Supreme Court and Sri A T Patra as his junior, to take up Orissa's case. In this way, the commissioning of the Indravati Project was delayed for another ten years.

While taking part in the debate, by the order of Ministry of Railways, I stressed the need to have a railway line from Lanjigarh Road to Amaguda near Jagadalpur via Bhawanipatna, Junagarh and Nowrangpur. The government was trying to find an alternate route, to bring the Bailadila iron ore to Visakhapatnam by joining the Raipur-Vizianagaram sections. This was because the Kottavalasa-Kirindul Railway line passes through a steep gradient and was a bottleneck in iron ore export to Japan. I

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had read the survey report of Mr Park's of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway of 1933, suggesting an alignment from Lanjigarh Road. The Government of India was impressed and ordered a new survey to be taken up. At that time, the cost was estimated at Rupees twenty-four crore as the track would pass mostly on plain land, except cutting of the Ampani Ghat. In my memorandum to the Government of India on Amaguda-Lanjigarh railway line, Upper Indravati Project and the Aluminium plant, I gave all necessary statistics and proved their viability. All these would not only develop backward areas, but also had the tremendous potential of earning foreign exchange, solving the problem of famine in Kalahandi district and creating employment opportunities in the Aluminium plant and in the various ancillary industries that would come up by its side.

In August 1970, all the MPs and prominent citizens of Orissa, including Sri Bijaya Pani, former PCC President, Sri Bijayananda Pattnaik (who had already left Congress and had formed the Utkal Congress), and Harish Chandra Buxipatra, joined our *dharna* in front of Prime Minister's residence to have the second steel plant of Orissa to be located at Nawagarh-Banspani in the backward tribal area of Keonjhar district. This was considered to be the best site out of the twenty-two possible locations in India. This was the opinion of such consultants as M/s Kuljians, M/s M N Dastur and Co. and the Ecafe Experts of the UNO.

The points in favour of Banspani were that it was in the midst of the high grade iron ore in the Gandhamardhan and the Malangtoli areas and was connected with the railway line supplying all the iron ore requirements to the Bokaro Steel Plant which is based near the coal mines. So, in the empty wagons, coal could come from Bokaro to Banspani Steel Plant. Because of cross transportation of raw material, the cost of steel production in Banspani would become cheap and at the same time, it will develop Bhuyanpir and

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Juangpir, the most backward areas of the state. The Orissa Government submitted a memorandum to the Government of India to include the establishment of Orissa's second steel plant in the next plan. There was a general discussion in the Lok Sabha on Orissa's second steel plant. It was I who initiated the debate and got an assurance from the Government of India that they would take into consideration all these facts while preparing their next plan.

I took part in the debate on establishing a jute mill at Kendrapara in Orissa. In the SC and ST Order (Amendment) Bill, I strongly fought through a non-official bill. I took up the case of the 'Bhataras' of Kalahandi who were treated as scheduled tribes during the 'State' time but were deleted in the Orissa list as the Bhataras are enumerated as Bhatada in Koraput district. There is absolutely no difference between Bhatara and Bhatada (as in Orissa and Odissa). The Bhataras are residing in Kalahandi and Koraput districts of Orissa, and Bastar district of Madhya Pradesh where they were enumerated as scheduled tribes. But this amendment bill was not passed. It lapsed when the House was dissolved on 1 January 1971.

I will be failing in my duty if I don't mention the adventurous steps taken by Smt Indira Gandhi in this Lok Sabha in order to build her and her party's (Congress(R)) image for the coming General Election. As early as April 1963, the socialists inside the Congress were for the nationalisation of banks since they wanted that the state should monopolise all the economic activities in the country. Smt Subhadra Joshi moved a resolution to nationalise the banks saying that, due to the emergency created by the Chinese's aggression, banks should be nationalised in order to mobilise the national resources. I opposed this on the ground that taking opportunity of the emergency, the lady member should refrain from preaching socialism. Fundamental rights of the citizens had been

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abrogated by the government's actions which could not be justified in a Court of Law. I further told her that human beings couldn't be reduced to pigs in the stable of socialism to allow the party men and defeated party candidates to become the beneficiaries of the 'so-called nationalisation' at the cost of the taxpayer.

I quoted from the Estimate Committee's report of three Lok Sabhas suggesting the appointment of a Special Public Service Commission for recruitment to public sector undertakings.

All leading banks were nationalised by Presidential Ordinance of V V Giri in 1970, though the Supreme Court held that nationalisation of banks was illegal. Immediately after this, another Presidential Ordinance was issued by Sri V V Giri revalidating the nationalisation.

The Swatantra Party opposed this move as its policy was against all monopolies including State Monopoly. And the Swatantra Party rightly claimed that concentration of the economic power in the states would impede the economic growth of the nation as nationalised commercial institutions like banks and insurance would act in a more bureaucratic way like any government department and not care for the business and commercial interests of its customers. Ultimately, this would build corruption and nepotism. Sri C Rajagopalachari had forecast that such a move would discourage foreign investors from coming to this country for any industrial or commercial enterprise. Future events as unfolded proved how true was that voice. After twenty-eight years, today, in 1999, the country's financiers are in a tight corner, overburdened with foreign debts and with depleted foreign exchange reserves, mounting unemployment and a parallel economy of black market, and an enormous trade deficit. Hardly any Non-resident Indian is willing to come to India, or to invest in his motherland. The flow is the other way in the form of brain drain due to

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reservation of jobs, promotions on the basis of caste. When our Constitution stands on the solid rock of socialism, and the state monopoly exists on the two financial institutions, i.e. nationalised banks and insurance corporations and the present rate of tax structure, what can we say to foreign investors?

Some papers predicted that the axe would fall on the privy purses of the ex-rulers as a form of political victimisation. If the Congressmen wanted to demonstrate that they were no less progressive than the Communists and the Socialists who had also kept power in some states, they could do so only by some spectacular decisions. The demand for nationalisation of banks and insurance emanates from the desire to parade financial progress rather than any economic compulsion or necessity. The abolition of privy purses was one such act.

The Hindu newspaper reported that, according to Sri S K Patil, the amendment in the AICC was passed by a snap vote with seventeen in favour and four against, late at midnight, when there was no quorum in the House of 600 members. Just before voting, Sri Morarji Desai (who had left earlier) came back and got a chance to stop all this. However, he voted against Mohan Dharia's amendment. Mr Y B Chavan remained neutral. He was not the Home Minister then. All national papers, and eminent persons like K Santhanam, D M Buch, A Appadorai, Bala Subramaniam Iyer, C C Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, B Shiva Rao, Prof A R Wadia, A G Noorani, the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, Inderjit, C Rajagopalachari, J S Bisht, K M Nagarkatti, N A Palkhivala, S T Iyengar, Ashoke Sen, Morarji Desai were against the government action on the AICC resolution. The government lost all credibility by breaking a constitutional bilateral pledge by an unitary action not justifiable in court. Pledges were broken like a piecrust and eaten at convenience. Where stood the credibility of the largest

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democracy of the world? It was a great betrayal.

The Twenty-fourth Constitution Amendment Bill was brought to the floor of the house on 14 May 1970 to abolish the privy purses and privileges granted to the 'Rulers' in the Constitution. The Bill came up for discussion in September 1970, and was passed in the Lok Sabha with 332 members supporting it. These included the Ruling Congress (R), Socialists, Communists, DMK and the BKD of Uttar Pradesh. The Congress (O) Organisation, which included stalwarts like Morarji Desai, Kamaraj Nadar, the Swatantra Party, the Jana Sangha, and independents like Mr Badruddoja from West Bengal and others, opposed the Bill. On 5 September 1970, the Bill was defeated in the Rajya Sabha, as 149 were for it and seventy-five against it. It failed to get the requisite majority of members present for the amendment of the Constitution. It may be noted that Sri Sankar Prasad Singh of Chichili and Rani of Fingeswar (both of Madhya Pradesh and both of them Congress persons) voted against the Bill. I learnt of the results of Rajya Sabha voting on the Lufthansa flight from Delhi to Hongkong. I was on my way to see the world fair in Osaka, in Japan. The same evening, Indian Cabinet met and decided to advise President V V Giri, then at Hyderabad, to withdraw the recognition of all the rulers. The courier was sent by plane to Hyderabad and the statute was brought back the same night, de-recognising all rulers. On 5 September 1970, separate letters were issued to all rulers withdrawing the Government of India's recognition. It was signed by Sri L P Singh, the Home Secretary, and it stopped all the privy purses and discontinuation of the privileges. On 7 September, this was raised in the Rajya Sabha.

This executive fiat of the government, which circumvented the Parliament, created a good deal of commotion throughout the country. All the rulers, in the meantime, formed an organisation called the 'Concord'

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under the Chairmanship of H H Fatesingh Rao Gaekward of Baroda. H H Sri Rajjee Megharajjee of Dharangadhra was its most active member. He took great interest in mobilising public opinion and taking legal opinions from the best available legal brains of India. Nine prominent rulers from various parts of the country headed by H H Madhavrao Scindia of Gwalior, filed a writ before the Supreme Court challenging the competency of the President's order dated 6th September 1970. A full bench of the Supreme Court was constituted, consisting of eleven judges under the Chief Justice, M Hidayatullah. The majority judgement was given by Justices J C Shah, S M Sikri, J M Shelat, V Bhargava, C A Vaidialingam, A N Grover, and I D Dua. Chief Justice Hidayatullah and Justice K S Hegde concurred with the majority judgement, whereas justice A N Ray and Justice B K Mitter gave dissenting notes. The petition was allowed, making the petitioners entitled to all their pre-existing rights and privileges, including their privy purses and declaring the President's order of 6th September 1970 as illegal. Advocates N A Palkiwala, M C Setalvad, M C Chagla, M K Nambiar, B G Murgeswar, R Goppalakrishnan, J B Dadachanji, etc. appeared for the petitioners. The Attorney General of India, Sri Niren Dey, H R Gokhale, S Mohan Kumarmangalam and some other senior advocates appeared for the respondent government.

On this historic judgement, Sri C Rajagopalachari, the doyen of India's statesmen, commented, 'the Supreme Court had, if I may say so, respectfully justified its existence. It has saved India's honour. The Court has justified the people's confidence in it as an impregnable bulwark for safeguarding justice and democracy against authoritarianism.' Agreeing with the Supreme Court's judgement, Sri K Santhnam stated that the whole episode of de-recognising the princes is rather hopelessly reckless and

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irresponsible.

In 1970, the total amount disbursed in privy purses was only four and a half crores of rupees, now equivalent to 1947's one crore in terms of the current purchasing power of the rupee. It came to 0.13 per cent of the total budget of the Government of India, and the recipients were 440 rulers. This small amount per annum stands for the constitutional durability of the country as against the security paraphernalia for VIP which is Rs125 crores yearly. The highest beneficiary was Nizam of Hyderabad who was getting 50 lakhs, later reduced to 26 lakhs, after the death of the original signatory.

The smallest privy purse went to the Ruler of Katodia, who was getting Rs16 per month. In his speech in Constituent Assembly, Sardar Patel had stated that, excluding Hyderabad and Mysore, the rulers gave a cash balance of seventy-seven crores besides the number of palaces, museums, cars, aeroplanes and other valuables which will go to several crores. Besides their army, they gave 12,000 miles of their State Railway. Gwalior State's Gangajali Trust was worth more than fifty crores of rupees. Its interest only would cover more than the annual privy purses of all the rulers. Even a small state like Sonepur in Orissa gave a Sonepur trust worth one crore of rupees to be utilised for the welfare of the people of the Sonepur state. The Orissa Government, however, flouted the objectives of the trust and started spending it in expanding the Sambalpur University and other institutions from that money, which was exclusively reserved for Sonepur people.

Naturally, the Prime Minister was furious at the Supreme Court judgement on the privy purse dated 15 December 1970. On 1 January 1971, she immediately advised the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha, which still had a year's life and called for fresh elections.

Future developments showed that when a vacancy

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occurred for the position of the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice A N Ray, one of the juniormost judges superseded three senior judges, Justice Shelat, Hegde, and Grover, and was appointed as Chief Justice. As a result, all three submitted their resignations in protest. The then Law Minister, Sri M Kumarmangalam, justified the government's action saying that we must have a 'committed judiciary.' Sri Nani Palkivala, in a fitting reply, stated that a committed judiciary was an incompatible term. Once a person was committed, he could not be a part of the judiciary and hold up the scales of justice. It was the same as 'melted ice cream.'

I had mentioned earlier about the differences that were accruing in the Orissa coalition government. At that time, the Orissa Jana Congress members under the leadership of Sri Pabitra Mohan Pradhan, decided to quit the government and join Indira Gandhi's Congress known as Congress (R). So, Sri R N Singh Deo, the Chief Minister of Orissa, thought it fit to advise the Governor of Orissa to dissolve the Orissa Assembly and call for a fresh poll. The all India election and Orissa elections were held simultaneously in 1971.

Before the election, in 1971, the various opposition parties met together to put up one joint candidate against the Congress (R). In spite of long night parleys, there was no consensus among the opposition parties on a common candidate. In most cases, there were triangular and quadrangular fights. The Congress (J) walked to victory, with a massive mandate since all the opposition votes were divided. In her Cabinet, Indira Gandhi introduced some new blood as in Sri Mohan Kumarmangalam, a leading lawyer in Madras and a Communist Card holder, and Sri Sidhartha Sankar Ray, a leading lawyer of Calcutta who later became the West Bengal's Chief Minister. Sri Kumarmangalam did not last long as he died in a crash of

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Indian Airlines plane near Agra.

In Orissa, the Congress could not get a majority, even though Sri H K Mahatab along with his Jana Congress, had joined the Congress (J) before the election. Though Swatantra Party numbers was reduced, it could form the government along with the Utkal Congress of Sri Biju Pattanaik. At my residence in Delhi, it was settled between Sri R N Singh Deo, the then Chief Minister and Sri Biju Pattanaik, leader of the Utkal Congress, that both would jointly fight against the Congress in the election. And Sri R N Singh Deo would withdraw all the cases initiated against Sri Biju Pattanaik, on the recommendation of Khanna Commission. In this 1970 elections, Biju Pattanaik contested in Orissa Assembly from five Assembly constituencies and one Lok Sabha constituency. But he lost all. Sri Patnaik would not agree to make R N Singh Deo, our ex-Assembly leader, the Chief Minister. He sent a message to me if I would like to lead the Orissa coalition government.

I most respectfully refused the kind offer of Sri Biju Pattanaik. I was not interested in state politics and I was contributing my bit in the Lok Sabha to my full satisfaction.

I got elected from Kalahandi Lok Sabha constituency and became the leader of the Swatantra Party in the Lok Sabha with Sri H M Patel (later Janata Party's Finance and Home Minister) as my Deputy and Sri Piloo Modi as the Secretary of the Parliamentary Party. This fifth Lok Sabha was the most exciting during my parliamentary career of twenty-three years.

In December 1971, Pakistan attacked India in the West. Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi took all the parliamentary parties into confidence and we, the leaders of various parliamentary parties, used to have long discussions till late at night. We even shared dinner together along with the experts and chiefs of Armed Forces and the top brass in our

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diplomatic service in her South Block office.

General Ahya Khan was the Military President of Pakistan. In the Pakistan election, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman of the Muslim League from East Pakistan got absolute majority. He swept East Pakistan's votes because the West Pakistanis were near the centre of power and they economically and culturally dominated the East Pakistanis. They ignored the state language of the Eastern Province. As per the election result, Sheikh Mujibur became the Prime Minister of Pakistan, but he could not last long. There was an army coup d'état and Sheikh Mujibur's family was put in jail. General Ahya Khan became the President and Supreme Commander of Pakistan. The East Pakistanis did not accept the central authority from Islamabad and discontentment was brewing among the masses. A parallel government was formed with Khandakar Mustafa Ahmed as the President of the Mukti Vahini. They hired a house in Calcutta and functioned from there, sending saboteurs to East Bengal for gorilla warfare and broadcasting in Bengali to the East Pakistanis to rise against the Central Government. At a later stage, the Indian Army joined in the liberation of East Pakistan along with the Mukti Vahini. After two weeks of intensive fighting, the Pakistani army in East Pakistan surrendered to India. General J S Arora, G.O.C. Eastern Command, Calcutta, flew down to Dhaka where General Niazi of Pakistan Army surrendered by placing his revolver in front of the Indian General and saluting him. This took place in the racecourse at Dhaka on 17 December. In this war, the only Member of the Parliament who actively participated was Capt K P Singh Deo, the Raja of Dhenkanal who fought in the Western Front. After the hostilities, when he returned to the Parliament, he was felicitated by the Parliament Members in the Central Hall and was presented a plaque. Col Bhawani Singh, the Maharaja of Jaipur and Col Sujeet Singh, the Maharaja of

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Kapurthala, were decorated with Mahavir Chakras for their outstanding gallantry. During all the three wars, in 1962 against China, and in 1965 and 1974 against Pakistan, the rulers of Indian States surrendered twenty per cent of their privy purses to the Rakshya Kosh as their gesture of patriotism. Those who were able-bodied participated in the war at great personal risk.

Many captured Pakistani tanks were left as mementoes in various towns. On the 16 November, Bangladesh, i.e. East Pakistan had already declared Independence and the Government in exile invited the Government of India's forces to help the Liberation of Bangladesh. This was done to put the legal seal of approval on India's intervention in the eastern front. In the Western front also, Pakistan received a crushing defeat when its Patton tanks were destroyed in large numbers in the village Ultauttar in Punjab.

After having burnt its finger badly in this war and having lost its most populous and surplus area in the east, the Pakistani morale was at the lowest ebb. It was a great day for Indira Gandhi. In the Central Hall of the Parliament, leaders of all parties felicitated Smt Indira Gandhi and His Excellency, the High Commissioner of the New Bangladesh, HE Dr A R Mallick. The whole city of Delhi was decorated with our national flag and the new flag of Bangladesh which has a rising sun against a green background. On behalf of the Swatantra Party, I congratulated the Prime Minister and the High Commissioner of Bangladesh in an emotional speech, quoting from *Kathopanishad* and hoping for friendly relations and a perpetual peace in the zone. As I wanted 'a peace of the brave, not a peace of the grave.' All parties praised the action of the Prime Minister for having dismembered Pakistan, which was in any case a geographical absurdity created by the partition of 1947.

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Utishtha ta jagrata prapya baran nivodhata kurashya dhara nishita durataya durgam patham tat kavoya vadanti

It means: 'Arise and awake after getting instructions from the elders as your destination is too far and the path is like a sharpened razor.'

Indira Gandhi with Dr A R Mallick, High Commissioner of Bangladesh and the Author in the Central Hall

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Chapter XI

THE EMERGENCY OF INDIRA GANDHI: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE JANATA PARTY

In the 1971 elections, only 54.8 per cent voters went to the polls. Of them, only 42.64 per cent voted for the Congress (J). So, Smt Indira Gandhi got hardly less than twenty-five per cent electoral support, though she always claimed her victory had a massive mandate. In the Cabinet, Sri H R Gokhale, a former Socialist who had resigned the Judgeship of the High Court on the ground that he could not maintain a life worth living with Rs3500 a month was the Law Minister. On 22 July 1971, he introduced two bills, i.e. the Twenty-fourth Constitution Amendment Bill and the Twenty-fifth Constitution Amendment Bill. In the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Twenty-fourth Amendment Bill, the Law Minister wanted to amend the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution because Supreme Court had Golaknath's case (1967, 2 S.C.R. 762). It held that the Parliament had no power to take away or curtail any of the fundamental rights guaranteed by Part III of the Constitution. In order to give effect to the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Bill envisaged to provide such powers to the Parliament as to amend the Fundamental Rights and to amend Article 13 of the Constitution to make this Act inapplicable to any amendment of the Constitution under Article 368. The Statement of the Objects and Reasons of the Twenty-fifth Amendment was not to make

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Article 31 of the Constitution for compulsory acquisition of property and arbitrary fixation of compensation not to be justifiable in any court. It virtually meant to do away with the right to property as the bill wanted the word 'compensation' to be replaced by the word 'amount', which virtually amounted to expropriation of property.

On 28 July 1971, at the introduction stage itself, I opposed these two bills, challenging the legislative competence of the Parliament, as I feared that in order to undo the decision of the Supreme Court, the proposed bill would lead to confrontation of the two organs of the government, i.e. of the judiciary and the legislature. I further stated that the Fundamental Rights were the modern name for natural rights, the primordial rights needed for the development of human personality, the rights to enable a man to chalk out his own life in the manner he liked best. Besides, our Constitution includes the rights of minorities and backward communities, which should not be subjected to the tyranny of the majority. All these rights have been cited in Articles 25 to 30 of the Constitution in Part III. I further cautioned that an irresponsible Parliament might sweep away the very basis of our Constitution as it happened when the Third Reich was established and the dictatorship of Hitler was built upon the ashes of the Weimar Constitution.

I pointed out how in the post-war Indonesia and Ghana, the amending power of the Constitution established dictatorship. While reminding everyone of the United Nations General Assembly covenants on civil and political rights and on social and cultural rights, I warned that no retrograde steps be taken. I quoted Lokmanya Tilak who had visualised a Constitution guaranteeing every citizen 'Freedom of expression, inviability of his house, right to property and equality before law.' I also repeated the words of Motilal Nehru from the Opposition Benches that, 'It is

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obvious that our first care should be to have our fundamental rights guaranteed in a manner which will not permit their withdrawal under any circumstances' and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's speech in the Constituent Assembly on Fundamental Rights, wherein he said, 'Fundamental Rights should be looked upon not from the point of view of any particular difficulty of the moment, but as something that you want to make permanent in the Constitution.' Chief Justice Sri K Subba Rao also opposed, confirming that such wide powers of amendment in Parliament were likely to be misused.

Regarding the Twenty-fifth Constitution Amendment Bill, I stressed that our fundamental rights, particularly the right of property, is our Magna Carta or American Declaration of Independence or French Declaration of the Right of Man as well as from the German Constitution. Even the Communist countries, like USSR, have a right to private property as fruit of labour, and the right to inherit is also recognised. In our Constitution, the right to property has been very much watered down and subjected to reasonable restriction by the legislature and by the executive. I concluded my speech by accusing the then Lok Sabha as Kuru Sabha where Draupadi's clothes were taken away while Bhisma, Drona and other elders were silent spectators. I charged the members of the Ruling Party of being mute when Mother India was being stripped of her values and fundamental rights. In 1989, a complete U turn in the Socialist Policy of USSR took place, with Gorbachev as the head and insisting on *glasnost* (transparency) and *perestroika* (reconstruction). This corroborated my earlier versions in the Parliament.

The year 1972 witnessed the elections to the various State Assemblies. In Rajasthan, our Swatantra Party MLA Maharaja Sumersingh was re-elected from the Kishangarh Constituency, which was his former state. After getting re-

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elected, he was killed under very mysterious circumstances in his farmhouse. All the newspapers pointed accusing fingers at the ruling Congress Party in Rajasthan and described it as a political assassination.

In the same year, the Titan of India's political horizon, the greatest living Indian, the conscience keeper of Mahatma Gandhi, the man who predicted twenty-three years ago the failure of Socialism in solving any human problem and who in his ripe old age of eighty-six years made his first foreign trip to USA to persuade President Kennedy to put a stop to the manufacture of atom bombs and nuclear weapons, breathed his last. In the Madras General Hospital, on 25 December, Sri Kamaraj Nadar, Sri M R Masani, Sri T T Krishamacharya, Sri Anna Durai, Sri M G Ramachandran, another actor Radha, our old friend Mr Muthuswamy, MP from Erode, Mrs M S Subbalaxmi, her husband T Sadasivam and I were present at Rajaji's bedside. All the streets in Madras leading to the General Hospital in front of the Madras Central Railway Station were jam-packed and the chanting of *Narayana Saranam Prapadye* could be heard from millions of throats. Our most respected Rajaji passed away to the lotus feet of the Lord. He has been permanently treasured in my memory. After his death, the Swatantra Party lost its guiding soul. In 1973, at the Madras convention, the difference of opinion among various leaders was conspicuous. Though Sri Piloo Modi was the President, he did not command respect from all sections. One after the other, some of the Swatantra stalwarts either remained quiet or defected to other parties. By that time our earlier President Sri N G Ranga had lost the election and most surprisingly joined the Congress Party.

In 1972, my son, Udit Pratap Deo, got married to the second Princess of the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj and was blessed with a son in 1974. In 1974, Jaya Prakash Narayan

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came out from his shell and started taking active interest in the affairs of the nation. Earlier we had several meetings at the Gandhi foundation building in Delhi suggesting electoral reforms. Our periodical get-togethers resulted in Jaya Prakash Narayan's movement named 'Citizens for democracy'. He first started this experiment in his home town Patna, leading an agitation for the dissolution of Bihar Assembly. He undertook a fast and a *dharna* in front of the Bihar Assembly, which went down well, and he could subsequently gather a large number of followers of the youth.

In 1973, my younger daughter got married to Yuvaraj Manavendra Singh Chauhan of Sanjeli in Gujarat. In 1974, my second son Bikram married the sister of the present Gajapati Maharaj of Puri, Maharaj D S Deb. I was greatly relieved after I completed my social obligations in respect of my two sons and two daughters and getting them well settled.

In 1974, Sri Morarji Desai and Sri Kamaraj Nadar, prominent leaders of the original Congress got elected to the Congress (Nijalingappa). They sat in the opposition with us though their Lok Sabha leader was Sri S N Mishra, an effective speaker who challenged every illegal action of the Prime Minister. These two elder statesmen sat in the back benches and were great source of inspiration for all of us. Sri Morarji Desai undertook a fast at his residence in Delhi for the removal of the corrupt ruling Congress Chief Minister, Sri Chimanbhai Patel in Gujarat. After getting an assurance from the Prime Minister that various charges against him would be looked into, he broke his fast. In our usual meetings with Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan, Sri Morarji Desai used to be present, along with Sri Charan Singh who was then the leader of BKD and of the opposition in Uttar Pradesh Assembly.

The year 1975 was eventful. In the 1971 election, Sri Raj

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Narayan contested against Smt Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister, from the Rai Bareli constituency. Though he lost the election, he filed an election petition in the Allahabad High Court on the ground that she was guilty of corrupt practices on two counts, i.e. use of the services of Mr Yashpal Kapoor who was a gazetted government servant and her secretary, and she obtained the assistance of UP Government officers for constructing rostrums and making official arrangements in her election meetings.

On 2 January 1975, Sri L N Mishra, Treasurer of the Congress Party and the then Railway Minister, died in a bomb blast while addressing a meeting in Samastipur Railway Station. In the same month, India recognised the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Mr Yarafat as the Head of the Government, even though he did not possess any territory. This was done particularly to please the Arab countries who were the main source of our oil imports. Politically, it meant spiting the Israeli government. Though there was a commercial attaché of Israel posted in Bombay, the Government of India had no diplomatic ties with Israel. The state came into existences after the Second World War under the resolution of the United Nations, in order to provide a homeland for the Jews who were scattered in different countries all over the world. Nearly ten millions of them had been killed in gas chambers by Hitler. Coming together from all over the European countries, the Jews created their homeland in Palestine, making Tel Aviv their capital. They re-introduced Hebrew, a dead language, as their state language.

Quite a number of Jews also migrated from Cochin in Kerala to Israel, and similarly, from USSR, USA and from different parts of the world, and settled in their promised land (according to the *Old Testament* of the Holy Bible). They started reconstruction of their country, which was mostly all desert, by sheer hard work, dedication and de-

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salinising the sea water. They made the desert prosperous, developed their science and technology and also became an atomic power. We in India are still bogged in linguistic and caste quarrels and have not been able to make Hindi acceptable in all parts of the country as the state language, and spend our energy without making India one nation. In such futile disputes, about a dozen of us from the Swatantra Party and some Sanskrit scholars from various other parties tried to make Sanskrit the lingua franca of India. We believed it to be the mother of most of the Indian languages and formed a Sanskrit Hebrew Friendship Society. But we were looked down by the government for having affiliation towards Israel.

During this period, India made great scientific advances. In 1974, India exploded the first atomic device in Pokran in Rajasthan. In 1975, Jaya Prakash Narayan addressed a massive public meeting in the Ramaleela grounds in New Delhi where all opposition parties participated and led a peoples' march to Parliament. All of us from the opposition and large numbers of people from all over the country went in a procession to the Boat Club near the Parliament House where Jaya Parakash read out the memorandum he was to give to the Parliament. He asked the Prime Minister, Smt Indira Gandhi to step down. From the Boat Club, we, the Members of Parliament along with Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan went to the Speaker, Lok Sabha, and to the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and handed over the peoples' petition for the government to step down. My brother, B K Deo, MP, Rajya Sabha, was also with me.

On 12 June came the historic judgement of the Allahabad High Court given by Justice Jag Mohan Lal Sinha. It set aside Mrs Gandhi's election on the ground of corrupt practices on two counts, use of the services of Mr Yashpal Kapur while he was still a government servant for furthering her election prospects and obtaining the

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assistance of UP Government Officials for constructing rest rooms and making other arrangements at her election meetings in Rai Bareli. The High Court held her disqualified for a period of six years from the date of the order as provided in section 8(a) of the 1951 Election Act. The High Court awarded the costs of the election petition to the respondent.

This news created a good deal of commotion throughout the country and a special session of the Congress Parliamentary Board and of the Congress Parliamentary Members was called. It was learnt that Smt Gandhi's initial reaction was to step down from office bowing to the Allahabad High Court's verdict. However, a powerful section in her party, and her second son Sri Sanjay Gandhi persuaded her not to step down but to go in for immediate appeal to the Supreme Court. After all, the Chief Justice was Sri A N Ray who had been promoted above three senior judges and had been given the Chief Justiceship as a political reward for his note of dissent in the Constitutional Bench decision on the privy purse case. Events moved so fast that it was difficult to keep track. On 25 June, an Emergency was declared all over the country. On 26 June, Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan was arrested in Delhi along with many MPs; Sri Piloo Modi, Rajamata Gayatri Devi of the Swatantra Party, Sri Chandra Sekhar and Sri Ramdhan of her own Congress Party, Atal Behari Vajpayee and L K Advani, Rajamata Vijyaraje Scindia from the Jana Sangh and Madhu Limaya, and Madhu Dandavata of the Socialist Party, and at a later stage Choudhury Charan Singh and Sri Biju Pattanaik.

The Lok Sabha met as usual in August and the Thirty-ninth Constitutional Amendment Bill was passed. The Representation of Peoples' Act was amended. As the Ruling Party had more than 3/4 majority for constitutional amendment, they could easily pass the Thirty-ninth

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Amendment Bill which withdrew the power of the High Court to adjudicate the election petitions against the Prime Minister and the Speaker, along with the President and the Vice President. The most damaging effect of this act was that it could have retrospective effects as interpreted by the Chief Justice, Sri A N Ray and his colleagues in the Constitution Bench. Senior Advocate, Sri Shanti Bhushan, who conducted Raj Narayan's case in Allahabad High Court magnificently put his argument about the validity of the Constitutional Amendment and the Election Law amendment. The Union Government was defended by the Attorney General, Sri Niran Dey and Smt Gandhi by Sri Jagannath Kaushal. The main argument of Sri Shanti Bhusan was that the Thirty-ninth Constitutional Amendment by taking the disputes relating to election of top four dignitaries, including the Prime Minister, outside the purview of courts, had destroyed a basic feature of the Constitution. According to him, clause 4 of the impugned amendment was liable to be struck down, also on the ground that Parliament, even in exercising its constituent powers, was not competent to dispute or declare a particular election to be valid. In his view, this was a judicial function.

The dice was loaded in favour of Smt Indira Gandhi's Government. So they expected the judgement would validate the election of Smt Indira Gandhi and giving retrospective effect to the Constitution amendment and the amended Representation of Peoples' Act. The Supreme Court's broad view on the retrospective operation of legislation was that there could be no limitation unless specifically prohibited. The power to pass acts could be exercised retrospectively as well as prospectively. The Supreme Court Bench heard the argument for forty-nine days and the result was in favour of Smt Gandhi and it gave a seal of approval for her continuance as Prime Minister during the period of stay.

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The backing of the Supreme Court, and with a three fourth majority in the Central Legislature, the Prime Minister, the chief executive of the country, became all powerful and acted as a dictator. Two most controversial legislations were passed in the Parliament, i.e. the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSAA) and Maintenance of Internal Security Act, i.e: (MISA). Under these two acts, anybody could be arrested and detained under suspicion. Under the Emergency many fundamental rights were abrogated, and the government's actions could not be questioned in court. On 2 September, Kamaraj died. Morarji Desai was detained under MISA and kept at Sohna in Haryana. He cooked his own food and lived on milk and dry fruits. Many atrocities were committed during this period, which have been brought to light by the Shah Commission. Col Bhawani Singh, the Maharaja of Jaipur who had gloriously fought the Pakistani War in 1971 and got the award of Military Cross was detained. Rajamata Gayatri Devi was physically tortured in jail by branding her face with burning cigarettes and was kept in the company of criminals and murderers. The Jaigarh Fort in Jaipur, a private property of the Raj family, was dug all over on the suspicion that their ancestors, Raja Man Singh, the Commander of Moghal Army during Akabar's time, had collected precious jewels and treasures and kept them there.

When in 1971 Sri Biju Pattanaik lost in the Assembly election, a common candidate, Sri Biswanath Das, a former Congress Chief Minister from 1937 to 1939 was appointed as Chief Minister of Orissa, with the support of the Swatantra Party and the Utkal Congress. As I mentioned earlier, I declined Sri Biju Pattanaik's offer to lead the coalition government.

Sri H K Mahatab was the Leader of Opposition. He had dissolved his Jana Congress and had joined the Indian

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National Congress (J). Sri Biswanath Das could not last long. On 19 January 1972, a large bunch of Utkal Congress MLAs, under the leadership of Sri Nilamani Routray joined the Congress Party along with some MLAs of the Swatantra Party who had defected from the party. When we were in the Keonjhargarh for the State Party Working Committee meeting with our Central President Sri H M Patel, the Congress made a bid to form the government under the leadership of Sri H K Mahatab, since Biswanath Das had resigned. Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi did not approve of the idea and sent Smt Nandini Satpathy, the then Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, to form the government. Sri Mahatab was disappointed. Sri Neelamani Routray became Deputy Chief Minister and Smt Nandini Satpathy became the Congress Chief Minister of Orissa. Her government did not last long as Sri Biju Pattanaik was not included in the government and the Orissa Congress MLAs had a meeting in Sri Neelamani Routray's house and planned to defeat the government by voting against the budget proposal. As soon as this news reached Smt Satpathy, the Chief Minister in the early morning, she phoned the governor recommending dissolving the house and going in for a fresh election. In 1974, there was another election for the Orissa Assembly and the Congress returned with a majority. Smt Nandini Satpathy became the Chief Minister of Orissa with Neelamani Routray as Deputy Chief Minister and carried on till she defected from the Congress and joined Sri Jagjivan Ram, Sri H N Bahuguna and Sri D N Tiwari to form the CFD, i.e. Congress for Democracy, just before the 1977 election. She was the Chief Minister during the Emergency.

In June 1972, Sri Piloo Modi, MP, was elected as the President of the Swatantra Party. He was a classmate of Sri Zulfiquar Ali Bhutto while they were studying in USA. On

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1 July 1972, an important political event in our relations with Pakistan took place at Simla. The Simla Agreement was signed between Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, and Sri Z A Bhutto, the President of Pakistan. Both agreed to settle their problems through bilateral negotiations and to abjure use of force. This step in the right direction was hailed all over the world. Sri Piloo Modi's presence in Simla and his contribution in this friendly agreement was greatly acknowledged by all. I playfully used to call him 'A Bridge Architect' from then on.

On 14 July, Sri Surendranath Dwivedy, the former PSP leader, joined the Congress after being defeated by Sri Surendra Mohanty in the Lok Sabha election. This was a summersault.

Like Sri Sidhhartha Sankar Ray, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Smt Nandini Satpathy, during her term of Chief Ministership during Emergency, created a reign of terror among the western districts of Orissa. These people stood strongly behind the Swatantra Party. Bolangir district, which all along stood behind Sri R N Singh Deo and produced a Chief Minister of outstanding administrative capability, became the target of the wrath of the Chief Minister. On 19 February 1974, five days before the polls in Loisinga Constituency, about three hundred hired *goondas* were carried in about half a dozen trucks to Salebhata, where they burnt seven jeeps of the Pragati candidate, belonging to the Maharaja of Patna, R N Singh Deo.

On the contrary, the Pragati candidate, Sri A U Singh Deo, son of Sri R N Singh Deo, former Chief Minister of Orissa, was implicated in a false dacoity case at Salebhata in his own constituency. Sri R R Singh Deo, MP, was also a co-accused in the same case.

Sri A U Singh Deo was arrested for some incident at Kotasinga on the polling day.

Sri Sadananda Mishra, Secretary of the district Lok Dal

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was stabbed in his stomach in broad daylight in Bolangir town.

Sri Dharam Singh Gadtia was brutally assaulted, stabbed in the head and beaten by some congress supporters on 3 October 1974.

Sri Durga Charan Behera, a young Municipal Councillor of the BLD was stabbed on 16 November 1974 between 3 and 4 p.m. by two youth Congress leaders, one of them being Sri Prafulla Mohanty, Secretary, Congress DCC Bolangir. The most brutal murder of Sri Parsuram Satpathy, a journalist and youth leader of Bolangir on 29 November 1974 by Youth Congress *goondas* was most shocking. Satpathy was an effective worker of the BLD and was resisting the antisocial activities of these rowdy elements. When he was returning home in the evening, he was chased by a jeep driven by these *goondas* and knocked down. The jeep rolled over the injured body several times, to make sure that he was dead. The Committee Magistrate, Sri Sivaram Rath, in his judgement brought to light the name of Sri Jagannath Pattnaik, President, Orissa Pradesh Youth Congress and Sri Tikaram Aggrawal, Chairman Municipality, Bolangir, and some others who according to him, were in the jeep. The names of the latter have been omitted in the police FIR.

The matter went to the Supreme Court, which ordered the retrial of the case, connecting all those who were implicated. In this regard, the contributions of Sri Haribandhu Swain, a leading advocate of Bolangir, in his fight for justice in spite of great risk to his life, is commendable. We, the Members of the Parliament, also did our best to highlight these atrocities during the Emergency. In Kalahandi, the Chief Minister along with her youth Congress workers tried to harass me by influencing the Tahasildar to tag three land ceiling proceedings against my two major sons and me who had already been separated

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from the land. They imposed one ceiling on me, which was later decided in my favour in the Supreme Court. In 1976, Sri H K Mahatab who had joined the Jayaprakash Movement and resigned from Congress was arrested and put in Phulbani jail. On 1 December, Sri Mahatab was released. This was after he wrote a letter to Sri Jayaprakash Narayan saying that he was withdrawing his support from the mass movement and after fourteen days, Smt Nandini Satpathy herself resigned as Chief Minister. She was replaced by Sri Binayak Acharya. January 1977 saw the release of all the opposition leaders and on 23 January, the Janata Party was launched by Sri Morarji Desai as Chairman and Chaudhury Charan Singh as Deputy Chairman.

From the Swatantra Party, Sri H M Patel and I were somehow left out and functioned in the Lok Sabha. We tried to highlight the various atrocities and excesses committed throughout the country. At the same time, we demanded good treatment to the internees and pleaded for their release. We also demanded the removal of the Emergency. In all my speeches, I pointed out that each would probably be my swan song since I apprehended arrest any moment. Taking advantage of the majority of the Ruling Party, the Prime Minister again amended the constitution, extending the life of Lok Sabha by two years, i.e. till 1978. Sri Sanjay Gandhi and his storm troopers were very active during this period and tried to mobilise the youth of this country to organise sterilisation camps in every ward and in every village. They forcibly sterilised even old men and women. Many people died due to lack of aftercare and many were crippled. This created a mass anger against the establishment. The Indian Press was completely gagged but the government media, i.e. TV and All India Radio blared full throated praises of the government. The reaction of the people was just the opposite. Foreign papers and magazines, which criticised the government's actions,

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were completely banned from circulation. Adverse world opinion used to trickle in sometimes from foreign Radio Stations. All the jails of the country were fully packed with detainees. In Kalahandi, the RSS leader Sri Satyanarayana Mund, advocate, and many other Rashtriya Swayam Sevaks like Sunil Behera, Nabin Mund and several others were arrested.

The Fifth Lok Sabha did not last its full extended term. The declaration of a fresh Lok Sabha election was made on 18 January 1977. Though the Emergency was not lifted, all the detainees were released. It was hoped that they would hardly get any time to organise themselves and mobilise resources to give a strong election fight to Smt Indira Gandhi who had been in power for such a long time and had been exercising full authority for the last six years. She had dismembered Pakistan and created Bangladesh as a feather to her cap.

Jaya Prakash Narayan, who came out from the prison, was physically shattered. He suffered from complete failure of both his kidneys. He was under dialyses. It was rumoured that introducing excessive tasteless salt in his diet damaged his kidney. It is impossible to find out the cause, but when he came out of the prison, he was a living skeleton. The final result of the election came on 20 March 1977. Smt Gandhi was defeated in Rai Bareli by Raj Narayan and Sanjay Gandhi faced a similar fate at the hands of an unknown opposition candidate from Amethi.

After the election results, the elected MPs met at Rajghat and were administered the oath by Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan that they would maintain the strictest discipline and function as one party upholding the highest tradition of democracy, and carry into effect the overwhelming mandate given to them by the Indian people. In North India, the Congress was completely swept out except one MP each in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. However, in the

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South the Congress did much better and captured majority of the seats in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. In Tamil Nadu, in collaboration with Mr Karunanidhi, the DMK leader, the Janata Party could not make much headway, except electing P Ramachandran from Madras city. In Andhra Pradesh, except N Sanjeeva Reddy and in Karnataka, except Sri H K Hegde, Janata lost all the seats to Congress. West Bengal and Kerala were captured by the CPM. The election of the leader of the Janata Party in Parliament took a curious turn. Sri Jagjivan Ram, Sri Charan Singh and Sri Morarji Desai were the candidates for the Prime Ministership. Instead of having a formal voting of the elected MPs, Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan and Sri Acharya Kripalani declared that they had already ascertained the views of all the MPs and the consensus was to have Sri Morarji Desai as the Prime Minister of India. Thus, Morarji Desai became the Prime Minister on 24 April 1977. This brought about grumbling in the camp of Sri Jagjivan Ram and Choudhury Charan Singh. Sri N Sanjeeva Reddy was elected as Speaker. On 11 February, President Fakiruddin Ali Ahmed had already passed away and Sri B D Jatti was acting as President of India. Though he was initially hesitating to call Morarji Desai to form the government, as it was an amalgamation of four parties, under the pressure of public representatives, he had to administer the oath of office to the Prime Minister. He did so on 24 March and the government carried on with tremendous goodwill of the people. The prices of commodities came down, giving great relief to the people. Inter-district and inter-state barriers were removed for free movement of foodgrains and other goods. There was great expectation from all quarters. The Congress MPs were completely demoralised. Sri Y B Chavan became the Leader of the Opposition. There was hardly any sting in the speeches of the main opposition. They, more or less, admitted the deficiencies and mistakes

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of the previous government, the promulgation of emergency and the various illegal and unpopular measures taken at that time, such as sterilisation and other excesses committed by the executive. Some members like Dr Karan Singh did not even hesitate to criticise Mrs Gandhi, putting all blame on her head even though all her Council of Ministers were party to her decisions. The central government's most undemocratic action was to advise the acting President, B D Jatti to dissolve the Legislative Assemblies of nine states' governments, even though their terms had not expired. The people of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka gave a befitting reply to this undemocratic action of the Central Government by electing the Congress in an absolute majority under the leadership of Sri Chenna Reddy and Sri Devaraj Urs, who later became Chief Ministers of their respective states.

On 5 May, the Janata Party was formally inaugurated. Chandra Sekhar became the President at the suggestion of Sri Jaya Prakash Narayan. As I was elected independently, Morarji wanted me to join JD, but my entry was strongly opposed by Sri Biju Pattanaik who was then Minister for Steel and Mines. I felt happy that I was at least free from that hotchpotch. I functioned as an independent member, along with Sri P G Mavalankar, the son of the previous speaker, late Sri M G Mavalankar (of the Central Legislative Assembly and the first Lok Sabha) who got independently elected from Ahmedabad. We got plenty of opportunities to speak, as all the members were new to the Lok Sabha. I do not know how we acquitted ourselves in discharging our duties. But we pointed out the various defects in the administration, highlighted the grievances of the people and suggested a realistic approach to various problems.

Before the Assembly elections, Sri Biju Pattanaik called me in his house at 3, Aurangzeb Road and requested me to go to Orissa, conduct the election and be the Chief Minister

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of Orissa Government. I most politely refused the offer as I personally felt I should not be obliged to anybody. I always wanted to act according to my discretion.

So after the Assembly Elections, Sri Neelamani Routray who was already a Rajya Sabha member and had five years to go was sent to Head the Orissa Ministry. Biju Pattanaik took over Steel and Mines in the Centre. During the Janata regime, nothing eventful happened. On 10 May 1978, I was informed by Sri D T Lakdawals, a Vice Chairman of the Planning Commission that the Government of India had sanctioned the Upper Indravati Project on the recommendation of the Krishna-Godavari Water Commission and the project had been included in the Fifth Five Year Plan and was about to start soon. I felt very happy because for nearly thirty-seven years since I took over the charge of the administration of Kalahandi state, I had been trying to have this project take off. Now it was going to materialise and would change the face of the district. The Prime Minister's Secretary told me that Morarji Bhai would be visiting Kalahandi to lay the foundation of the project and I should be present there to receive him. Till then, I had no intimation from the Orissa Government about the Prime Minister's visit to my constituency. I wrote to the Chief Minister that in the programme, I may be included, either to welcome the Prime Minister or to thank him. I was surprised to receive a letter from the Chief Minister, Neelamani Routray that I could not be accommodated in the programme since the programme had already been chalked out by the government. The plan had completely eliminated me. I understood the meanness of the Orissa Government. However, I made it a point to attend the opening ceremony and met Morarji Desai, who was extremely pleased to see me. In spite of tall assurances at the opening ceremony by the Chief Minister, the progress of the construction of the Indravati Project started at a snail's

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pace. Those who were initially appointed in charge of the construction did not take the amount of interest as expected and hardly stayed at the site. Thus, there was no work worth the name from 1972 to 1980 till the chief construction engineer, Sri Damodar Sahoo, was appointed. The people of Kalahandi owe a sense of gratitude to Sri Sahoo, in the way he started the work with great hazards to his health and faced insurmountable difficulties.

There was a by-election to the Lok Sabha from Chikmagalur in Karnataka, and the Congress fielded Smt Indira Gandhi. The Janata candidate was Veerendra Patil and George Fernandes was in charge of his election. She came out with flying colours. The credit, of course, went to Sri Devaraj Urs, the Chief Minister of Karnataka who managed the entire election. Mrs Gandhi went to the Lok Sabha and took oath in Kannadese and was an ordinary member of the Congress Parliamentary Party. A Privilege Motion was tabled against her, since all the various excesses committed during the Emergency had been revealed by Justice Shah in his report.

As she refused to appear before the Committee and give evidence, the matter was referred to the house. As she was adamant about not making a statement, the house, by its majority, approved the Government Motion that she should be arrested and sent to jail. P R Mavalankar, H V Kamath and I met the Prime Minister, Morarji Desai and requested him not to take this extreme step. It would make her a heroine and she will get public sympathy. Some other steps like reprimanding her on the bar of the house or suspending her for a few days from the house should be taken. But the Prime Minister replied that though he agreed with our views, Choudhury Charan Singh was insistent that as she had sent them to jail in the Emergency, they should retaliate by sending her to jail. In the voting, we three opposed the motion to send her to jail. Sri C M Stephen,

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the Congress (I) Leader of the Opposition made a speech in May 1978. Mr Stephen said, 'Sir, with all humility I bow to the collective decision of the majority and hand over to you Madam Gandhi to receive whatever punishment you inflict on her. But on this occasion I can assure the country that like a Phoenix, she will rise from ashes like Jesus after resurrection and in the coming election, she will rule the country as the Prime Minister.' Future events proved this true. In 1980, she returned with a massive mandate from the people and was Prime Minister again. People were fed up with the groups in the government quarrelling for power.

Inside the Congress Party, those who criticised Mrs Gandhi in the house for her excesses during the Emergency did not like to be in the Congress Parliamentary Party. There was a split into two - Congress (Indira) and the Congress (Sharad Pawar). In the Parliament, CM Stephen became the leader of the Congress (I) and Y B Chawan was the Leader of the Congress (S). The election commission froze the Congress election symbol and granted two new ones to these two parties, i.e. Congress (I) and Congress (S).

Inside the Janata Party, there were too many aspirants for Ministership and surreptitiously, negotiations were going on for defection. This became obvious on the floor of the House when the ante-defection bill was tabled on behalf of the government by the Cabinet Minister, Sri P C Chander, it was to the surprise of everybody, opposed by Sri Madhu Limaye at the introduction stage. As events developed, some flimsy charges were made inside the Janata Party by Chaudhury Charan Singh and Raj Narayan against the Prime Minister's son, Kanti Bhai, for alleged corruption. In the meantime, secret parleys were going on between Sanjay Gandhi and Raj Narayan in the Guest House of Mohan Mekins Brewery to bring down the Janata Government.

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One fine morning, in 1979, Sri Maniram Bagdi, an MP belonging to the Raj Narayan group, shamelessly crossed over the floor from the Janata benches. Next day, Raj Narayan also went to the opposition camp followed by Chaudhury Charan Singh, Biju Pattanaik and others who took advantage of the situation. Mr Y B Chawan, the Leader of the Opposition brought a 'No Confidence Motion' against Morarji Desai. Before facing the 'No Confidence Motion', Sri Morarji Desai submitted his resignation as Prime Minister. The President called Mr Y B Chawan to form the government. On his refusal, Chaudhury Charan Singh came forward and formed a government. I would like to mention here the role of Sri George Fernandes, who took part in the 'No Confidence Debate' as the Minister for Industries, most vociferously defended Morarji Government, paying the highest tributes to his integrity and administrative ability. However, the next day's papers announced that George Fernandes had resigned from the Morarji Government to become a follower of Chaudhury Charan Singh. I would like to call this the blackest chapter of the history of India's democracy. What examples have our so-called leaders set for posterity? Lok Nayak Jaya Prakash Narayan, who had built this entire movement and brought an awakening among the Indian masses, was upset. He sat crying in his Kadamkua House at Patna saying *hamara bag ujad diya*, which means 'they have completely destroyed the garden reared by me.'

Chaudhury Charan Singh formed the government but he was asked to prove his majority in the house on 17 August 1979. He, however, got the chance to address the Nation from the Ramparts of the Red Fort on 15 August 1979. On 17 August, when we all assembled in the Lok Sabha, neither the Prime Minister nor the Members of the Cabinet were present to test their majority. In the lobby, Sri H M Patel and I were informed by Sri Biju Pattanaik that

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since the Congress has decided not to support Chaudhury Charan Singh's Ministry, they had recommended to the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha and call for election after six months and to remain caretaker government at the Centre till that time. However, an attempt was made to form a Janata Government in the Centre under the Prime Ministership of Sri Jagjivan Ram. The Leader of the Janata Parliamentary Party met Sri N Sanjeeva Reddy. He assured them that he would consider the matter. But by the time they reached their residences, the All India Radio announced that the Lok Sabha had been dissolved and there would be elections after six months. Till that time, Choudhury Charan Singh's cabinet would continue as a caretaker government.

Though I was an Independent Member, I made an appeal to my colleagues on 23 July 1979 which was as follows:

> In order to give a fitting reply to the rank opportunists and professional saboteurs of Indian democracy, I appeal to all right thinking members of the Lok Sabha to support the Government of India to be headed by Sri Morarji Desai in order to eradicate the virus of defection and political horse trading thereby to make the sapling of democracy take firm roots in our sacred motherland. Those who blame the government for failures should realise that they were part of the government till yesterday.

On 1 August, I made another attempt to convince the President and later released it through the press. 'I met the President of India today and requested him to withdraw the pleasure of the President from holding office of the Council of Ministers under Article 75, Clause 2 of the Constitution before a constitutional crisis develops when the Council of Ministers advises the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha and go in for a mid-term poll under Article 74(1) of the

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Constitution while they continue in office. When this advice comes, it becomes mandatory on the President and cannot be challenged in a court of law under Article 74(2) of the Constitution even though such advice goes against the clear condition given by the President to secure the confidence of Lok Sabha by the third week of August 1979 while calling Sri Charan Singh to form the government. Nothing is impossible for these power hungry politicians.

After discussion, the President has agreed that it is high time now to make specific provisions in the Constitution if such a contingency arises. The Parliament is empowered to do so under article 70 of the Constitution. My meeting with the President was of no avail. Choudhury Charan Singh and his friends manoeuvred in such a way that they remained in power six months prior to the election and could raise the requisite resource to fight a Lok Sabha election as the 'Lok Dal' with a different symbol. The atmosphere in the capital was stinking with all sorts of talks of manipulation, bribes, false promises, seduction, allurement, money and sex. The people in general lost all faith in the Janata Party and in the splinter group, i.e. the Lok Dal then in power. All outside visitors coming to Delhi made a beeline to Mrs Indira Gandhi's residence as the only saviour.

Though the report of the Commission of Enquiry headed by Sri J C Shah, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India unearthed several stinking skeletons from the cupboard of the Congress Government, such as the declaration of Emergency, the misuse of the Information and Broadcasting media, irregularities in appointments, institution of all criminal cases, detention of leaders, malice search and seizure, operation under the Income Tax Act, import of air craft by Dheerendra Brahmachari, firing in Turkman Gate, public misuse of power, fabrication of records, inhuman treatment of the

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detainees in the jails, indiscriminate demolition of houses in Delhi and forcible sterilisation of young men and women by the storm troopers of Sanjay Gandhi, these had no effect on the masses because they were completely fed up by the quarrels, mutual recrimination and crossing of floor by the MPs of the Ruling Party. They decided to have a government that works in the next election. It was clear that Sri C M Stephen's forecast was coming true and Smt Gandhi will be back in power soon. And it did happen in 1980.

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Chapter XII

THE ATTEMPT OF PYGMIES TO SAVE DEMOCRACY IN INDIA AND THE FALL OF SOCIALISM

New Sunrise

I wanted to complete my book earlier, but did not know where to stop as current events overtook me. However, I never expected that certain changes in the attitude and action of the government that were forecast by the eminent C Rajagopalachari and Swami Chinmayananda would take place during my lifetime.

In 1959, when the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev visited USA, he promised that Communism would match the material success of the free market by 1981. But all his endeavours to initiate reforms failed and in the subsequent three decades, Soviet production fell further and further behind targets. In spite of all attempts to improve agricultural production, the Soviet Union was forced to import grain from the West. Western Economics in contrast accelerated all growth and all the East European countries were burdened by inefficient state enterprises and factories, incapable to meet the growing demand of the people. Production of consumer goods declined. Shortage of food and other necessities brought long queues at the shops, which were mostly empty. In 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev became the President of USSR and the General Secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, he proclaimed, at Lenin's grand statue (now at St Petersburg) that 'we must

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change our attitudes from the worker to the Minister.'

His strategy for change was *glasnost* (political openness) and *perestroika* (economic reconstruction). On 4 January 1990, while welcoming Swami Chidanandaji Maharaj of Divine Life Society at Bhawanipatna, I expected a new era of permanent peace, tranquillity and progress of the mankind. I quoted Mikhail Gorbachev's utterance that having embarked upon the road of radical reform, the socialist countries are crossing the line beyond which there is no return to the past and his admission during this meeting with Pope John Paul-II that, 'the moral values that religion generated and embodied for centuries could help in the work of renewal in our country.'

Thirty years ago, when the various political parties of India were vying with each other for more and more radicalism as a means of giving higher material gain to society and were curbing all individual initiatives in the name of nationalisation, while the bureaucrats were applauding, knowing fully well that they would be the biggest beneficiaries in the process of production and distribution of the nation's wealth, a lone voice was raised by the tallest statesman I had met, C Rajagopalachari. He asked us to go back to *dharma*. According to him, *dharma* is bereft of the rituals, has now become the monopoly of the Pandits, Moulavis and Padrees, in the portals of the temple, mosque and church. According to him, *dharma* was a moral code of conduct which could guide the behaviour of any individual and any state and make for accountability to God.

The motives of science, religion and political philosophy are ultimately similar since they strive to serve the state and generations of people to bring maximum happiness in life. In its anxiety to discover the means to redeem society from the clutches of the wild and irresistible power of nature, Science has arrived in the corridors of power with an atom bomb in hand, pushing this planet to the brink of complete

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annihilation. The latest political philosophy, that of Marxism, has snatched away all impetus and the creative genius of man for more production, ultimately reducing him to a nut or bolt in the huge state machinery. That is why the Soviet Union, the fatherland of Communist ideology, has been unable to feed its own people. Bereft of the bare necessities of life, its people have made a U turn.

Seventy-four years after Tsar Nicholas II abdicated in March 1917 and was shot by the revolutionaries, the Soviet state that succeeded the Romanov Empire has dissolved. The dying act of USSR was the resignation of the Soviet President, Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev on Christmas Day, 1991.

If the ghost of Nicholas were hovering around St Petersburg or at Sverdlovsk where the Tsar and his family were shot in March 1918, it would surely have chuckled at the irony of the historical reversal.

The two words, *perestroika* and *glasnost*, that became instant buzz words in the political vocabulary, set the ball of change rolling. They were first coined in 1986 and spread fast and far. Even when people found that Gorbachev was not carrying out promised changes, the critics turned round and said there was not enough of *perestroika* and not enough of *glasnost*.

Standing on the threshold of the twenty-first century, I witnessed the bitter confrontation in Russia's Parliament on 27 August 1991 where Boris Yeltsin forced Gorbachev to read out a statement calling for the disbandment of the Communist Party. The latter fell victim to a coup by disaffected hard line Communists. But then, after three days the coup died in the face of popular protests led by none other than Yeltsin.

One after another, the republics broke with Moscow until soon all fifteen of them were independent, many militantly self-assertive and threatening anarchy. But the

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republics needed to co-operate as trading partners. In December, the republics formed a Commonwealth of Independent States with its centre in Minsk, the capital of Belorussia.

The subsequent events, as mentioned below, took place, astonishing the entire world.

This century witnessed a galaxy of political events in China, the most populated country of the world with its ancient culture and vast history of world's great conquerors. In the early twentieth century, in 1908, His Magesty Henry Pu-yi started his life as a boy ~~empire~~ ascending the gilded throne of the forbidden city Beijing as the Tenth Ruler of Quing (Manchu) Dynasty. After three years, at the tender age of six, a nationalist putsch under Sun Yat-sen recognised by the Chinese as the concrete modern founder to build the happiest country of the people, by the people, for the people. Twelve years later, Puyi was rescued from his prison palace by an ambitious war lord and was reinstated in 1932 as a figure head ruler in the province of Manchukuo by the Japanese who had occupied the North Eastern Province, i.e. Manchuria Province, a revival of K Quing dynasty. In 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allies and the dream of his empire being dashed, he landed as prisoner by Soviet troops in a far eastern jail.

On being released to the Chinese Army in 1950, who by not executing him and making a martyr like Nicholas II of Russia, sent him to jail in Beijing Botanical Garden where he was a gardener, according to a Maoist role and underwent relentless thought reform. He ultimately died of cancer in 1978. By that time the Kuomintang Government, under Marshal Chiang Kai-shek had been ousted from the main land to the Taiwan Island by the communist reign of Mao Ze Dong.

After various economic experiments with accompanying Chinese Gulag and mass execution of all opposition minded

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persons, cultural evaluation leaped forward with blooming of thousand flowers. China remained a poor country. In 1972 Richard Nixon's trip to China virtually pierced the great wall and many Chinese doors had opened, though communist barriers continue to wall the liberty of the people. In 1976, Mao died. In 1989, the infamous Tinnamen tragedy took place where many peaceful student demonstrators were butchered. However, the next President, Deng Xiaoping, on his visit to USA in 1979 normalised Chinese relations with USA when Jimmy Carter was America's President. Investments trickled after 1978. When Deng Xiaoping introduced economic reforms, China made lots of latest rules and the world took Hongkong and Taiwan as the eye-openers. This trickle became a flood in 1984 and State Governments were allowed more autonomy in national trade and investment.

In Poland, on 5 June, Solidarity won thirty-five per cent of Polish Assembly seats.

On 24 August, Tadeusz Mazowiecki became the first non-Communist Prime Minister in Eastern Block.

In Hungary, on 11 September, the government opened its borders, allowing 60,000 Germans to migrate to the West.

On 10 October, the Communist Party dissolved itself, renouncing Marxism-Leninism for social democracy.

In East Germany on 7 November, leader Egon Krenz and the Politburo resigned.

On 9 November, the Berlin Wall was opened and the two Germanys were united.

In Bulgaria, on 10 November, leader Todor Zhivkov resigned.

In Czechoslovakia, on 17 November, the police quelled demonstrations in Praha. But on 24 November entire Politburo resigned and a non-communist government was formed under Václav Havel.

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In Romania, on 22 December, President Nicolae Ceauescu was overthrown.

On 25 December, Ceauescu was executed by court order.

As Communism crumbled throughout Eastern Europe, its traditional icons too were brought low. In East Berlin's Lenin Plaza, Lenin himself, the founding father of the Soviet Union was humbled even as the official face of Communism looks on unmoved. This historical event had its own repercussions throughout the world, particularly in Africa and in South America. In only a few states like China, North Korea, Cuba and some minor states emerged unmoved. In India, the Finance Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh in Narasimha Rao's government liberalised the economy and introduced competitive marketable consumer goods giving full impetus to the producers. But this liberalisation has been faltered during implementation. In our Constitution, we still find the word 'Socialism' quite prominently curtailing the creative genius of man and the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. There are still various laws, which cannot be adjudicated in the Court of Law under Schedule-IX of the Indian Constitution like de-recognition of rules, which is a great betrayal. I feel that soon right thinking will prevail and this great ancient country will fully play its role in guiding the world in the coming years.

On the resignation of the Chandra Sekhar Government, Mr Nani A Palkhivala, said, 'The beginning of the Chandra Sekhar Government marked the end of stable democracy. The end of the Chandra Shekhar Government presages the beginning of a period of turmoil and uncertainty with unforeseeable consequences for the future.'

The present crisis has been created by self-seeking politicians, hungry as locusts for power and office, who put the good of the country nowhere on their list of priorities.

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They have turned the moral bedrock of Indian society to lava. Men, with their eyes glued on the vote bank, have been whipping up insane confrontations based on caste, creed and tongue. They have pushed the country dangerously towards the position of a state without a nation.

Fresh elections to the Lok Sabha will probably solve no problem. They may only bring into existence a new edition of the present Lok Sabha.

No Third World country can rule out the prospect of losing democracy or national integrity, particularly when it combines social divisiveness with political instability. No less dangerous is the prospect of governments so enfeebled and emaciated that they are unable to cope with the multifarious problems, which this unfortunate country faces today.

It is time our public spirited citizens face the grim reality as our democracy is in shambles.

We want a stable and secure government, irrespective of the political affiliation. We Indians know where we stand. We have seen enough.

In 1979, I suddenly fell ill and was admitted in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. After a thorough examination, I was operated upon for removal of gallstone. My right kidney had a growth, which was later found to be cancer. However, after five years, I was declared to be free from the cancer syndrome. But, unluckily, in 1983 my wife developed no appetite for food and was found to have an obstruction in her stomach. She was operated upon. In the midst of the operation, the surgeon called me and said that the stomach cancer has spread all over the lymph nodes inside and it could not be removed. I was told that she would live for only three months. I first hesitated and later told her what the doctor told me. She took it most courageously and told me how fortunate she was that she would die with *Chudi* and *Sindoor* in my presence. She

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passed away on the Sravan Purnima day in 1983. I feel her loss deeply. Before that, after losing my Lok Sabha election in 1980, both of us had joined the Chinmaya Mission. We were highly impressed by the vedantic discourses of Swamiji in Calcutta. She undertook a correspondence course from the Mission and had passed most of the exams. After her death, we found that she had left about four trunks of registers noting down only Ram Naam, of course, without my knowledge. She must have done it in her spare time. On the advice of H H Swamiji, we placed those trunks in the basement of the Sree Ram Temple at Siddhabadi in Kangra district (Himachal Pradesh) where he had built a beautiful ashram and held regular classes, pravachans, hospital service, social service and other activities. I have been visiting this ashram regularly for five years and used to stay there for about ten days each time. Having practically left active politics, I spend most of my time in studying ancient scriptures. I have also organised a small Satsang Hall at Bhawanipatna, with Professor Narayan Mohapatra as its Acharya. We meet regularly in the evening and have classes and *satsang*. Because of my failing health, I have not been regular in the daily attendance. But the meeting definitely gave me peace of mind and directed me to a happy life. At the same time, I devoted my spare time to the local problems of the district. My children and relations are in active politics and are in different parties. Sometimes, I address public meetings on the BJP platform since most of its programmes are akin to those of the Swatantra Party.

As far as local problems are concerned, it was my life's ambition to divert the Indravati water from the Godavari basin to the Mahanadi basin, thereby irrigating nearly 6.00 lakh acres of agricultural land in the plain of Kalahandi state. As the water drops come from a height of 1300 ft., it would generate 600 MW of hydropower which will be helpful for

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the development of Orissa. At the same time, it should attract many industries to this district, as it is full of natural resources like forests and mineral wealth. Since the post-merger period saw a complete denudation of all the forest areas, the rainfall has become erratic and caused occasional scarcities. The Nawapada subdivision, which was tagged from the Central Provinces area, has faced conditions of famine so many times. Now it being part of Kalahandi district, naturally Kalahandi became centre stage when the prevalence of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome was identified in the adjoining areas. It became a pet subject for various papers and writers and has come to be well known throughout the country as the 'Kalahandi Syndrome'. However, I am glad to know that in the last two years, three out of the four dams in the Upper Indravati Project have been completed. It has not been able to impound all the rainwater in the 110 sq km lake, in the hilly area, as planned. In 1991, after the retirement of the energetic and dedicated General Manager and Chief Engineer Sri. Damodar Sahu, the work was done in a haphazard way by his successor. Due to human error and bad work, a tunnel tragedy occurred in which nearly 200 people working there were washed away. This caused a big loss to Orissa. Expensive machinery and the penstocks of the power house worth about thirty crores were completely damaged. The work stopped for nearly four years because the World Bank stopped payments. However, after the appointment of their consultants, the work has begun again at full speed and in about a couple of years, the dam will be completed. Even though the fourth dam on the Mooran (Indravati's tributary) is not complete, they are supplying water to the fields for the Khariff crop by providing a bypass tunnel.

Thus, the procurement of paddy in the last two years have shot up, creating a problem to the administration about where to store it as there are not sufficient

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warehouses in the district. Further, improved irrigation will help in the large-scale production of sugarcane, groundnut and other oil seeds along with cotton. Dr M S Swaminathan, the harbinger of the green revolution, which has made India self-sufficient in food and a great environmentalist once, described Kalahandi to be the breadbasket of Orissa. Chief Minister Sri J B Patnaik reiterated this on 27 November 1997 in the public meeting at Junagarh. Those of us who had been associated with all this since 1940 were extremely happy for the metamorphosis of Kalahandi from 'Syndrome' to 'breadbasket'. This was no less than a miracle created by the Upper Indravati Project.

However, the problem of sedimentation of the lake remains. The proposed mining operation on the Bafalimali Parbat and the Aluminia Plant with a township disposing its effluents inside the lake are all located in the catchment area of the Indravati system. All experts and the satellite imageries have given sufficient warning.

The situation forced me to file a public interest petition in the Orissa High Court. I also asked Professor Madhu Dandavate, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission to visit the site. The High Court's findings and the Planning Commission's visit are yet to materialise. If the Cauvery water could be fully utilised as was by the irrigation system constructed by the Chola kings in Tamil Nadu in the Tenth Century AD, not a drop of the precious water would be wasted in going to the sea. The Upper Indravati Project's water could bring immense benefit to its command area, have full longevity and not be shortened by premature silting. After all, water is the most precious item on this planet. I quote from Professor Sir Jadunath Sarkar's book how Emperor Shah Jahan, a prisoner in the Agra Fort, which had only one well of brackish water, wrote the following letter to his third son, Emperor Aurangzeb.

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My son, my hero,

Why should I complain of the unkindness of fortune, seeing that not a leaf is shed by a tree without God's will. Only yesterday I was the master of nine hundred thousand troopers and today I am in need of a pitcher of water. Praised be the Hindus in all cases; as they ever offer water to their dead. And thou, my son, art a marvellous Musalman. As thou, caused me in life to lament for water.

The Indravati water originates in the eastern ghat hills from three springs at the feet of our Mother Goddess, Maa Manikeswari and Sri Neelakantheswar Mahadev. This water can change the entire character of this district if fully and properly utilised. Let posterity enjoy the fruit of these workers. This is my last wish. I am eighty today and may or may not be alive to see the result. But standing at the threshold of the twenty-first century, I pray that let the people of Kalahandi prosper.

The eighties were the most unstable period in Indian polities. It witnessed the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by the Sikhs as an outcome of the Blue Star Operation, which destroyed the Akali Takht and the Golden Temple in Amritsar. Later, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by the Tamils of Sri Lanka as the Indian Peace Keeping Force was sent to Colombo. Before his premature death, Rajiv Gandhi had forced an election when his Finance Minister, Sri V P Singh resigned on Bofors Gun deal in which various members of the government were accused of receiving kickbacks and siphoning them to various tax havens outside the country. V P Singh, though elected in minority, formed the government with various groups to form a majority. He tried to create vote banks on the basis of caste and religion relying on the Mandal Commission Report. The BJP leader, L K Advani brought the 'Ram Ratha' from

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Somenath (in Gujarat) and was arrested in Bihar by Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav. This led to fall of V P Singh Government by the BJP's withdrawal of support. This led to the Government of Sri Chandrasekhar, which had hardly forty-five members, with Rajiv's support. Later the support was withdrawn.

Fresh elections to the Lok Sabha may solve no problems. They may only bring into existence a new edition of the present Lok Sabha.

No Third World country can altogether rule out the prospect of losing democracy or national integrity, particularly when it combines social divisiveness with political instability. No less dangerous is the prospect of governments so enfeebled and emaciated that they are unable to cope with the multitudinous problems, which are facing the nations. It is time our public spirited citizens face the grim reality, for our democracy is in shambles.

Though we hope for a complete reversal of the regulated economy and emergence of liberalisation with Sri Manmohan Singh as the Finance Minister when Sri P V Narasimha Rao (Congress) was saddled on power due to the sympathetic vote arising out of the sudden death of Sri Rajiv Gandhi by the explosion of a human bomb at Sriperumbudur. This economic progress was half-hearted because the objective was to be in the helm of power anyhow, in order to adding personal wealth by any means.

The subsequent events brought out various scandals and kickbacks, which are still sub judice. I don't want to comment on the outcome of the court, but top to bottom we passed through a period of corruption and to be in power anyhow, creating there own vote banks either on the basis of caste, creed, religion, or culture. Instead of creating a united India with this vast cultural background, the petty politicians further divided and subdivided the integrity of this country to capture votes and to be in power, anyhow.

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Future writers will deal in detail on this dismal part of this decade. This aspect was quite understood by Mr Jinnah because he nominated one Jogendra Mandal, a Scheduled Caste Lawyer of Dhaka to represent Muslim League in the central coalition cabinet of Congress and Muslim League, prior to partition in the post-Second World War period. It reminds me of the 'Takskak', the great serpent entering the bedroom of Parikhit as a tiny worm and in its time became a huge serpent to sting the king to death. This is what we learn in *Bhagavad Gita*. Similarly, in the bloody politics of this huge India, with one fifth of the world population, the caste virus entered the politics of this country to completely ruin it in time unless we were aware of this danger. As I quoted earlier, the swift action of Sardar Patel to integrate the Indian States in the dominion of India further consolidated it. In due course, we gave a modern constitution to ourselves where we eschewed all discriminations on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. The draftsman was no less a brilliant person, i.e. Dr B R Ambedkar, who in spite of great pressure incorporated the provision for reservation of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe only for a period of ten years to be completely abolished after that. This virus became more prominent in later periods when Sri Bindeswari Mandal, a Member of the Parliament, earlier the Chief Minister of Bihar for a short period, was appointed as the Chairman and recommended to the government to have a long list of Other Backward Classes in the various states to extend this policy of reservation in the legislatures, in employment opportunities, in promotions in service, in admission in various government educational institutions, etc. Later, the government used to differentiate the creamy layer of the OBCs where the economic criterion was highlighted. This is popularly known as the Mandal Commission's report which was responsible to create vote bank for power in this

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democracy.

Though there was caste system in the Hindu society, it was based on division of labour. We have seen several instances. Ravana being the son of a Brahmin can become a Rakshas and Aswathama, son of a Brahmin could become a Chandal by his action, and similarly, a Scheduled Caste like Ratnakar, the robber could become the first great Sanskrit poet (Adikavi) having written the great epic 'The Ramayana' and the advisor of Narada, the saint. Coming to this modern age, you will be glad to know that in 1996, Kalahandi Lok Sabha general seat returned Sri Bhakta Charan Das, a Scheduled Caste to the Lok Sabha and Nuapada general seat returned Sri Ghasiram Majhi, a Scheduled Tribe, to the Orissa Assembly and Khariar, a general seat, returned Sri Duryodhan Majhi, a Scheduled Tribe to the Orissa Assembly. Where is the caste system? In the areas where caste is playing important role, this problem is predominant. Cheap slogans like 'Garibi Hatao', or 'Reservation on the basis of caste and sex' (prohibited in our constitution) will ruin this country, unless there is a civil war as in USA where all discriminations against the Negroes were washed away by President Lincoln after the war at Gettysburg. So democracy has to remain with one man having one vote, i.e. irrespective of all bias. It will bring permanent peace and prosperity for this country in the coming century. History and Geography have made India, Pakistan and Bangladesh as one integrated unit, but lust of power has created all problems for all of us. This is what the eminent jurist Nani Palkiwala and the renowned Election Commissioner Sri T N Seshan think. The cheap slogans may cheat some persons for the time being and can create bad blood, but does not unite them to build a greater world. That is what all religions say, accountability for your action to one authority, you may call 'God', and complete transparency of all your transactions in life will eliminate all

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corruption and earthly wealth will never go with you.

I wanted to complete my book earlier, but did not know where to stop it as the current events overtook me. However, I never expected that there would be certain changes in the attitude and actions of the governments that the inevitable so emphatically forecasted by two eminent Indians, i.e. C Rajagopalachari and Swami Chinmayananda will take place during my lifetime.

Though the historical sixth Lok Sabha was short-lived, I tried to focus on some of the important issues so vital to the country and more particularly to my constituency. Taking part in various demands of the 1977 budget, I made out a strong case to have a railway line from Lanjigarh Road, Bhawanipatna, Junagarh, Jaipatna, Nowrangpur and then to Ambaguda near Jagadalpur. This line was drawn based on two surveys made by the Railways taking into account the possibilities of exploring the Bailadila iron ore and bauxite deposits in the Koraput-Kalahandi belt and the industrial and agricultural potential of Kalahandi district after the commissioning of the Upper Indravati Project which will irrigate 6.00 lakh acres of land and generate 600 MW of hydro-electric power.

Coming to Orissa as the Chairman of the Railways Convention Committee, I made the Orissa Government agree to include this Railway Project in the Five Year Plan and mentioned it in the coming budget. When the next government came, the Aluminium plant came up in Dhenkanal district far away from the bauxite ores. This was because of the existence of a vast coal deposit at Talcher useful for the generation of Thermal power. All credit goes to Sri Raja K P Singh Deo, the local MP. The Upper Indravati Project's work started at a snail's pace till the World Bank and other countries, particularly Japan, came forward to finance the entire project of 700 crores with a nominal interest for payment. Still, the progress of work is

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ten years behind schedule. My Lok Pal bill attracted support from all quarters. On the acceptance of the principle of the bill and on the assurance given by the Home Minister, Sri Charan Singh that very shortly the government would bring an official bill on the subject, I withdrew it. But what a disillusionment! The bill never came, though it was the first unanimously recommended bill of the Administrative Reforms Commission headed by Morarji Desai in 1966. Till today, in 1999, the Bill is not in the Statute Book of the Government of India. From this, one can gauge the sincerity of the various governments who have come and gone in these last thirty years to eradicate corruption from the administration. I also tried my best to enact a bill where the various political parties were to be registered under the Registration of Societies Act of 1860 and were to submit their annual return of Income and Expenditure attached with vouchers in the Parliament for scrutiny. But no political party supported this idea.

It was my duty to bring to light the names of the defaulting agents of the Food Corporation of India, in Kalahandi district whose outstanding dues to the State Government were worth Rs1,69,592.33 and to the Food Corporation of India were worth Rs71,71,138.85. The Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Sri Surjit Singh Barnala, blacklisted them. All big commercial houses that used to finance different political parties in the district were against me.

Sri H V Kamath brought an unofficial resolution on eliciting public opinion on making an endeavour for a World Constituent Assembly for World Government. My friend, Sri P G Mavalankar and I forcefully supported this resolution. Though the operative portion of this was of an advisory character, it was unanimously supported by the House. An international seminar was held in Colombo, which I attended as an Indian delegate in 1979 along with

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my wife.

In 1980 and 1984, I contested two Lok Sabha elections and lost, and then remained as an ordinary citizen, writing articles on various subjects and looking after the welfare of the local people who sent me as their representative to the Assembly and the Lok Sabha for nearly thirty years. I closely looked after the progress of the Upper Indravati Project which had various obstacles due to bad workmanship and human failure, resulting in the Tunnel Tragedy, which the Board of Revenue Member, Sri S Sundarajan identified to be due to human negligence, and which stopped the flow of funds from the World Bank. The work was thus delayed for nearly four years.

In the meantime, there had been successive deaths of our two Prime Ministers - Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi, who ordered the Blue Star Operation on the Golden Temple at Amritsar, was shot dead at her residence by a sentry; after a few years, her son Rajiv Gandhi, who had sent India's Military as a Peace Keeping Force to Sri Lanka to suppress the Militant Tamilian who demanded a separate 'elam' or territory, was killed by a human bomb in a public meeting at Sriperumbudur. Then followed a series of short-lived central governments of Sri Chandrasekhar, Sri V P Singh, Sri P V Narasimha Rao, Sri Deve Gowda, Sri I K Gujral and Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee. There was no stability in the centre. At least, the 1999 elections produced Sri Atal Behari Vajpayee as the Prime Minister of India with a massive mandate - with 296 MPs out of 538 elected out of the total elective seats of 543. BJP fought the election on the National Democratic Alliance Platform along with other like-minded parties and allies.

Thus, the most struggle-some period of Indian history has passed, and in 1999 we are at the close of this twentieth century millennium. On 5th October 1999, I completed eighty years of my life. Standing on the threshold of the

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twenty-first century, I would like to say that as the millennium winds down, we are called upon to examine the past and compare it with the present in a singularly breathtaking manner. Mementoes of weighty events from 1900 until now swirl around in the electronic and print media. Millennial stock making leaves us with plenty of pluses, but there are minuses that could knock holes in the achievements of the twentieth century if they are not addressed and dealt with quickly. One of those twentieth century downers is knocking a large hole in the ozone layer due to environmental exploitation on the plea of progress, along with other dereliction caused by human short-sightedness which is causing erratic monsoon patterns in India, drought and unusually hot summer. After the mistakes committed, a new awareness has come to the people to bring investments in power, water, infrastructure, human resources and restoration of forest and agriculture, which were greatly damaged for the so-called economic development. Pure, natural water is the most precious item today. We hear that the Indian President is going to harvest all rain water in the Raisina Hill, i.e. the Rashtrapati Bhawan, for his use. This thinking found expression at the Rio-de-Janerio Conference in 1992, followed by Kyoto Protocol in 1997. Now, it is time for India to be accountable for preservation of its environment.

That's why, as mentioned earlier, I have filed a Public Interest Litigation in the Orissa High Court against the Utkal Alumina and Orissa Government, for giving a bauxite mining lease and location for the Alumina Refinery at the fringe of the Upper Indravati Project Lake of 110 sq. kms. I have also filed a petition before the Human Rights Commission as it will do immense damage to the beneficiaries in the irrigated area and to the Deccan Mahaseer (Kodree Kodree and Kodree Tor) - the giant fish ideal for sporting - because the reeds and other aquatic lives

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in the lake will be destroyed. Dr M S Swaminathan, in his letter to the author, has stated that, 'It is a well established fact that mining activities, including disturbances of the surface soil cover, disposal of the overburden of the waste materials, along with destruction of the vegetative forest cover, will overload the stream and rivulets flowing into the dam with silt and other waste products. Further, deposition of bauxite along the riverbeds is likely to cause decline in the production of crops and vegetables growing in them due to the inherent infertility of the soil and aluminium toxicity. When I was with the Planning Commission of the Government of India, a similar problem in Goa was brought to our attention. It was only the concern of loss of productivity of agricultural land as well as its possible deleterious efforts on the quality of the drinking water that prompted me to suggest a detailed study by a technical commission on the need for ecological mining.'

Few days back, the famous *Time* magazine of New York, out of 100 prominent influential Asians of the twentieth century, has selected three great Indians who have changed the course of history - Sri Rabindranath Tagore as the people's poet, Sri M K Gandhi, the peaceful warrior of Independence for India, and Dr M S Swaminathan, the Father of the Green Revolution, who used his skill in genetic engineering and his powerful persuasion to make famine an unfamiliar word in Asia, and has given a goodbye to the theory of Malthus on population and food production. After fifty years of effort in passing through various ups and downs, at last, in my lifetime, I saw the completion of the Upper Indravati Project and the generation of eco-friendly Hydro-Power will be accomplished and added to the All India Grid in next November.

Another disturbing feature which has been brought to light by Dr Rohella and Dr Narottam Sahoo of the Regional

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Research Laboratory, Bhubaneswar is that aluminium is a toxin with its damaging effort reported on the adverse nerve system, brain and responsible for Alzheimer's disease, which affects one's intelligence, memory and change in personality and ultimately, damages bone and blood vessels. It affects food production and ultimately the body, as per Hyderabad based National Institute of Nutrition. I sincerely hope that these aspects should be properly looked into and the mining and industrial activities should be shifted to the other side of the water dividing line, so that the beneficiaries will get full benefit of this huge project, having the largest peak power station in the Eastern India.

The last kick of this millennium was the super cyclone on the coastal district of Orissa in the last week of October causing colossal loss of standing agricultural crop in ten districts, loss of human lives of about 50,000, nearly ten times of this number of cattle. Lakhs of houses, both pukka and kutcha, were completely destroyed and million tons of polythene sheets were purchased without calling for tender in spite of clear instructions of Gamang, the then Chief Minister, a politician of twenty-seven years in Lok Sabha with a very clear image. Relief in huge quantities came from all over the world.

Prime Minister A B Vajpayee came to Orissa and Bhubaneswar on the sixth of November and I met him for massive relief operation in money, material and men to take charge of even distribution to the affected areas, even in the inaccessible areas, by the Navy, Army, and Air Force men.

The immediate reaction of Orissa's Revenue Minister, Sri Jagannath Patnaik came in next morning's paper refusing the assistance of central officers, but accepting whatever material and financial help came from Central Government. A regular political drama was played on Orissa's history to oust Sri Gamang from the Chief Ministership. We all felt proud that, at last, we got the most

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transparent and honest Chief Minister.

But alas! Smt Sonia Gandhi sent two groups of observers to Orissa and they acted in such a way, stinking the entire political horizon.

Since the Orissa election will be held within four months, Sri Gamang states in the paper that he would not waste a minute to quit if Sonia (the Congress High Command) asks him to quit. The manner in which Madhavrao Scindia and Vayalar Ravi reportedly dealt with Gamang in his residence made him suspect and he refused to see them and complained to Sonia. When Sonia sent the second group of observers, he resigned stating that his politics was to serve the people, not to do business and earn money and stated that he is proud of being controversial and non-partisan in politics, and in spite of one vote of his which pulled down Vajpayee's previous government, he was getting best possible co-operation from the centre in tackling the post super cyclone phase and thanked all, from all over the world, who help Orissa for making the huge contribution of relief material. Gamang accused the dissidents of filching relief material and fund. Blankets sent from USA and France were sold in Calcutta market like thousand other stuffs. What an unceremonious departure of an honest man in Indian politics. While quitting he stated that his politics was to serve the people, not to do business and earn money.

I may or may not be there, but sincerely hope that in the next century map of Asia, this great country should be guided to a new horizon by the efforts of Dr Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate in Economics and other stalwarts. Prime Minister Sri A B Vajpayee unites all people as one nation in this country, where all religions, caste, creed, languages, customs and fundamental differences are eschewed in the service of the motherland - India.

At the threshold of the next millennium, I see Atal

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Behari Vajpayee standing, welcoming the sunrise of the twenty-first century, flanked by Dr M S Swaminathan, the eminent scientist with a bundle of crops in his hands, and Dr A P J Abul Kalam, the great nuclear scientist, holding an atom bomb and a missile, challenging any attack on Mother India, whether it is the latest call of the Jehad by Omasa-bin-Laden, the international terrorist responsible for explosion of the USA Embassy in Nairobi and Dar-ersalam sending trained terrorists to Kargil, or any other threat.

In this century, we have seen enough of India - from Hume of last century to Sonia. The next millennium will witness the emergence of a *New Bharat Varsh.*

JAI KISAN, JAI JAWAN, JAI VIGYAN

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APPENDIX

Agreement made this 15th day of December 1947 between the Governor General of India and H H Maharaja of Kalahandi state (Karond).

Whereas in the immediate interests of the state and its people, H H the Maharaja of Kalahandi state is desirous that the administration of the state should be integrated as early as possible with that of the Province of Orissa in such manner as the Government of the Dominion of India may think fit. It is hereby agreed as follows.

Article - 1

H H the Maharaja of Kalahandi state hereby cedes to the Dominion Government full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of the state and agrees to transfer the administration of the state to the Dominion Government on the 1st day of January 1948 (herewith referred to as 'the said day').

As from the said day, the Dominion Government will be competent to exercise the said powers, authority and jurisdiction in such manner and through such agency as it may think fit.

Article - 2

H H the Maharaja shall with effect from the said day be entitled to receive from the revenues of the state annually for his privy purse the sum of Rs1,14,000 (one lakh fourteen thousand rupees) free of taxes. This amount is intended to cover all the expenses of the ruler and his family, including

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expenses on account of his personal staff, maintenance of his residences, marriages and other ceremonies, etc., and will neither be increased nor reduced for any reason whatsoever.

The said sum may be drawn by H H the Maharaja, in four equal instalments in advance at the beginning of each quarter by presenting bills at the State Treasury or at such other Treasury as may be specified by the Dominion Government.

Article - 3

H H the Maharaja shall be entitled to the full ownership, use and enjoyment of all private properties (as district from state properties) belonging to him on the date of this agreement.

H H the Maharaja will furnish to the Dominion Government before the 1st day of January 1948 an inventory of all the immovable property, securities and cash balances held by him as such private property.

If any dispute arises as to whether any item of property is the private property of H H the Maharaja or State property, it shall be referred to such officer with judicial experience as the Dominion Government may nominate and the decision of that officer shall be final and binding on both parties.

Article - 4

H H the Maharaja, H H the Maharani, H H the Maha Rajamata, the Yuvraja and the Yuvrani shall be entitled to all personal privileges enjoyed by them whether with or outside the territories of the state, immediately before the 15th day of August 1947.

Article - 5

The Dominion Government guarantees the succession, according to law and custom, to the gadi of the state and the Raja's personal rights, privileges, dignities and titles.

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In confirmation whereof Mr Vapal Pangunni Menon, Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of States, has appended his signature on behalf of and with the authority of the Governor General of India and Pratap Keshari Deo, H H the Maharaja of Kalahandi State has appended his signature on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors.

Cuttack | Pratap Keshari Deo
Dated 15th December 1947 | H H the Maharaja of Kalahandi

V P Menon
Secretary to the Government of India
Ministry of States

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SAMBALPUR UNIVERSITY

ORISSA

CITATION

Srijukta Pratap Keshari Deo

Volumes would not be enough to survey so eventful a life as you have lived. Words would fail to measure your worth as a man of great vision and action. You were born on 5 October, 1919, to the late Maharaja Braja Mohan Deo of erstwhile Kalahandi State. After completing education in Law you took over the administration of your State following the sad demise of your father. As an ideal ruler would, while the country was passing through a transition from British Raj to Independence, you established a popular government in your state based on decentralization of power and separation of Judiciary and Legislature from the Executive From this first progressive step that you advanced you took greater strides in building Orissa during the post-independence period. Your contributions to Kalahandi have acquired a larger significance in the context of Orissa.

You modernized Agriculture in Kalahandi State, launched the Indravati Multipurpose Hydel Project and took a number of other pioneering steps such as opening a Fishery Department and a Geological Department in Kalahandi State.

Your munificence was legendary. Still greater was your bounty to Orissa as a statesman. For the period from 1952 to 1957, you were elected to the Orissa Legislative Assembly, thereafter, you were elected to Loksabha from Kalahandi till 1980. During this period, you put the Lokpal Lokayukt Bill, Anti-Defection Bill, Registration of Political Parties and Publication of their Audited Accounts Bill in the statute book of India.

You have been a member of many important and learned bodies like Bombay Natural History Society, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, The Oriental Bhandarkar Research Institute, Poona, the Indian Numismatic Society etc.

You have generously patronized sports, literature and education. Your donation of Rs. 4,00000 to Burla Engineering College, and various other colleges shall always be remembered with gratitude. You are a generous ruler, erudite scholar, progressive thinker and ideal public servant, all rolled into one. On the occasion of the Thirty-first Foundation Day, we not only felicitate you for your admirable and distinguished achievements, but also pray for your long, healthy and prosperous life.

01 January, 1998
Jyoti Vihar

Vice-Chancellor

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AN OFFERING

To Sri Pratap Keshari Deo
Maharaja of Kalahandi

He lived among the elect, he grew
He threw himself among the commons
And yet he grew; his soul opened to the new
Fields of service to rise above all intrigues.

His heart was sound, his head cool,
No summer heat could upset him
He learnt, he studied, he was no fool
And now he serves brother – man to his fullest brim.

He does not pine, he does not brood,
He works honestly to do good
The stars, the rivers, the sky, the pictures are all there
To watch him and to bless him in his new career.

Lakshminarayan Sahu
A member of the Constituent Assembly of India
Member, Servants of Indian Society,
Cuttack - 753 001
Camp - Kalahandi
Dated 11.7.1955

From A Feudal Sovereign to A Democrat Subject

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The Jagannath Temple of Shree Neelachal Seva Sangha (Regd.) at Hauz Khas, New Delhi (The Author is the Elected President since its Inception)

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Map of Kalahandi

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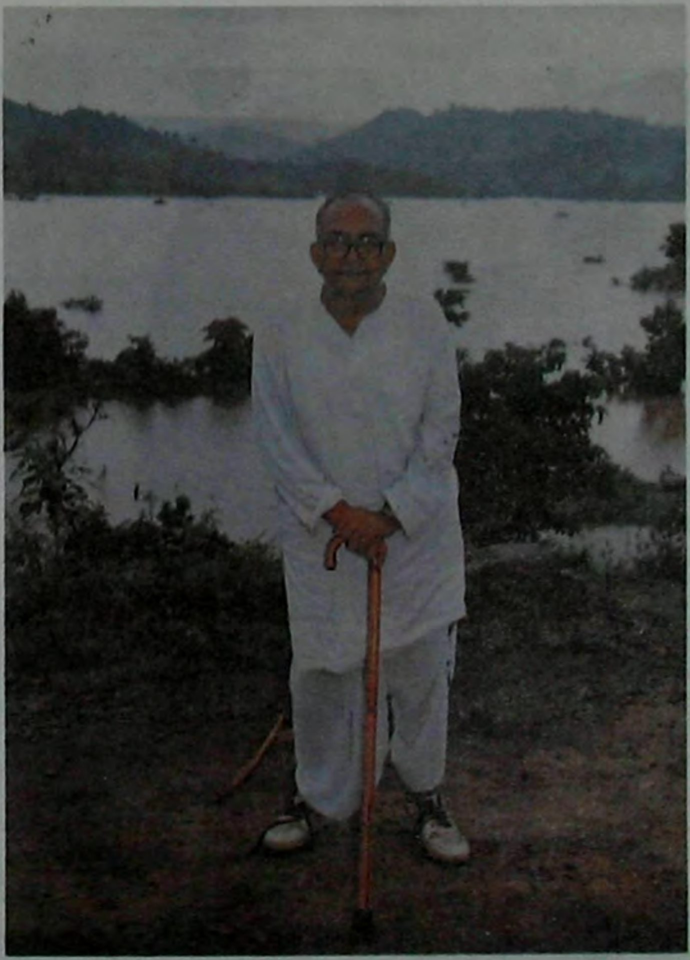

P K Deo standing near the 125 sq. kilometre the Upper Indravati Lake at F.R.L. 643 M. The Bafali Mali Parbat in the background.

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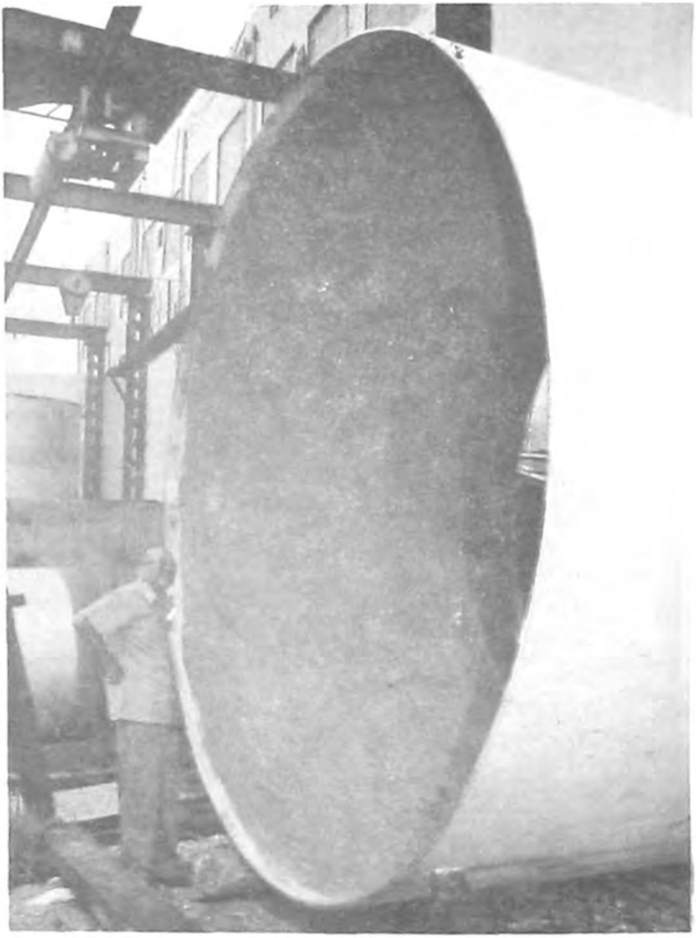

B K Deo (his brother) standing near the fourth penstock

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1978 – P. K Deo, President Rajaji Memorial Committee, New Delhi, leading Acharya Kriplani. Prime Minister Morarji Desai, who was the President of the Statue Inaguaral Function can also be seen.

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MEMOIRS OF
A BYGONE ERA

P K DEO

In 1947, India consisted of more than five hundred royal states of which one was Kalahandi, in Orissa. The author is the thirty first ruler of Karond, or Kalahandi. He ruled from 1939-1948, when he, and other princely rulers, agreed to merge their administrations with that of the modern, united Indian Dominion State.

Subsequently, this erstwhile Maharaja's career shuttled between national and state politics even as he endeavoured to carve a new role for himself at the helm of democratic India. His successes and disillusionment, inevitable in the new arrangement, come alive in these pages.

Racy and detailed, responsible and nostalgic, these memoirs take the reader for a long walk through the corridors of power. This is essential reading for those interested in an insider's view of Indian politics in the last fifty years.

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